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**Dissemination of a Legend: The Texts and Contexts  
of the  
Cult of St Guthlac**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
Durham University  
2011**

## **Abstract**

This thesis gives an overreaching, detailed analysis of how the Anglo-Saxon cult of St Guthlac of Crowland developed from its modest origins in the eighth century to its summit in the early thirteenth century. It attempts to elucidate the reasons why and how an isolated fenland hermit became the object of widespread veneration instead of drifting into obscurity. In order to consider these reasons, fourteen materials have been chosen from the substantial and varied dossier of surviving Guthlacian materials, to elucidate particular phases or stages in this cult's development. Ultimately, this thesis considers the function, dissemination, interaction and reception of materials indicative of each author's adaptation of their subject matter for their patron(s) and audience, and in response to a changing ecclesiastical context. Its central argument is that the adaptability and popular appeal of the Guthlac narrative enabled this cult to benefit from lay support prior to the foundation of a monastic community at Crowland, possibly as late as three hundred years after the saint's death.

This thesis is organized into seven chapters which respectively contribute to a holistic analysis of cult development. Following the introduction, chapter two seeks to draw attention to the variety and import of the Guthlac dossier through an analysis of the historiography relating to their dating, origins and provenance. The purpose of this chapter is to establish a chronology and identify fourteen materials which will be used to define different developmental stages; the Origins, Vernacular Variations, Norman Developments and Longchamp Revival, in subsequent chapters. The third chapter uses a variety of sources to reconstruct Crowland's historical geography and landscape in order to determine how this context initially and over time affected the development of the cult. It argues that there is no evidence to support that Crowland was chosen as anything other than a site for ascetic retreat within borderlands, both perceived and actual, and that this choice provided substantial challenges to our perception of a cult's requirements, though none that were insurmountable. Chapter four will proceed onwards to the dossier itself in order to consider how the Guthlac narrative was adapted in response to the changing ecclesiastical contexts defined in chapter three. An analysis of the sources used by these authors and the alterations which they made indicate that there were elements to these texts that were best understood and appreciated by a literate audience, that was likely exclusively monastic. In fact, the authors who were creating new Latin compositions for abbots of Crowland in the years following the Norman Conquest were less and less concerned with creating a text which could be easily comprehended by those with sparse Latin abilities and source knowledge, than they were with meeting the changing needs of successive abbots at Crowland and their progressive designs for the cult. There were nevertheless, other atypical elements found within the origins and vernacular variations phases which are not resolved by this interpretation. Subsequently, chapters five and six explain the social relevance of the heroic and visionary aspects of the Guthlac legend according to contemporary attitudes and accounts. Overall, it will

be shown that the cult of St Guthlac of Crowland benefitted from the popular appeal this legend garnered early on, for this enabled it to remain adaptable and relevant until Crowland could take over, with variable results, the propagation of the cult.

## Acknowledgements

I am conscious of the debt I owe to many friends and colleagues who have encouraged and supported me along the way. My interest in this subject area has been both inspired and challenged all along by my supervisor, David Rollason, who has single-handedly advised me since my Master's year at Durham. His rigorous questioning and counsel have always encouraged me to be more discerning. I would also like to thank Clare Stancliffe, Pat Mussett, Giles Gasper, John McKinnell and past members of Durham's Medieval and Renaissance Postgraduate Discussion Group for many helpful and encouraging discussions over the years. Special mention should go to Raluca Radulescu and Catherine Clarke for their constructive correspondence regarding my third chapter and various other Guthlaciana, as well as to Tom Lambert who has been my closest companion throughout my time at Durham. Tom's constant, sympathetic bolstering of my spirits through conversation, victuals, or even the sending over of his Ruth made the most arduous days joyful and the last few years spent back in Canada have been much harder without him and our visits to 'the boys'. I also feel that I would not have made it through this process without the advice and humour of my attic-mate, Matt Greenhall. It was a gift to be able to live and study at Durham; one which would not have been possible without an Overseas Research Grant provided by Durham University. I am also appreciative that the Senior Common Room at University College provided me with a travel grant to survey Crowland's landscape and photograph the images found in the appendix. Thank you to Dave Tetlow and Matt Greenhall too for so many last things.

Reflecting on this process, it strikes me that it could not have been fathomed if I had been raised differently. My parents and grandparents provided my brother and I with opportunities that they never had, and even more importantly, with the gratitude to appreciate and the determination to make the most of them. Consequently, my greatest debt is to my parents, George Bacola and Vanessa Warner, and to my grandparents, Howard and Gladys Warner. It is with great sadness that my grandparents were unable to see the completion of this thesis. This process would have seemed insurmountable without the love and support of so many friends and family but most especially, I am grateful that my brother, Rian Bacola, and my friend, Sarah Taylor, steadfastly listened and encouraged me along the way. Finally, my mother deserves special mention for displaying a saint's patience in helping me with technical problems and the appendix. Her enthusiasm for my research daily reminds me why I began this study in the first place.

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## Abbreviations

The majority of abbreviations classified here were used to identify primary sources and the editions of them that were consulted. They are cited using the same format as secondary sources here and in the bibliography.

AVC	Anonymous, <i>Vita Sancti Cuthberti</i> in Bertram Colgrave, ed., <i>Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life</i> (Cambridge, 1940), pp.59-139.
AVGG	Anonymous, <i>Vita Gregorii Pape Urbis Rome</i> in Bertram Colgrave, ed., <i>The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby</i> (Cambridge, 1968).
BVCPr.	Bede, prose <i>Vita Sancti Cuthberti</i> in Bertram Colgrave, ed., <i>Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life</i> (Cambridge, 1940), pp.141-307.
BMVC	<i>Bedas Metrische Vita Sancta Cuthberti</i> , ed. by W. von Jaager (Leipzig: 1935).
GA	Anonymous, <i>Guthlac A</i> in J. Roberts, <i>The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book</i> (Oxford, 1979), pp.83-107.
GB	Anonymous, <i>Guthlac B</i> in J. Roberts, <i>The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book</i> (Oxford, 1979), pp.107-124.
HE	Bede, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> in B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds., <i>Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> (Oxford: 1979).
MVG	Henry of Avranches, <i>Vita Sancti Guthlaci</i> in W. F. Bolton, 'The Middle English and Latin Poems of Saint Guthlac', submitted for D.Phil., Department of English, Princeton University (1954), pp.35-106.
OEM	Anonymous, <i>The Old English Martyrology</i> in G. Kotzor, ed., <i>Das Altenglische Martyrologium</i> (München, 1981).
OEVG	Anonymous, <i>The Old English Vita Guthlaci</i> in C. W. Goodwin, ed., <i>The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac</i> (London, 1848).
PVG	Peter of Blois, <i>Vita Sancti Guthlaci</i> in C. Horstmann, ed., <i>Nova Legenda Anglie: As Collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave, and Others, and First Printed, with New Lives, by Wynkyn De Worde</i> (Oxford, 1901), pp.698-727.
VA	Athanasius, <i>Vita Sancti Antonii</i> in Evagrius' translation in C. White, ed., <i>Early Christian Lives</i> (London, 1998), pp.1-70.
VColumbae	Adomnán, <i>Vita Sancti Columbae</i> in A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson, <i>Adomnán's Life of Columba</i> (London, 1961).
VColumbani	Jonas of Bobbio, <i>Vita Sancti Columbani</i> in D.C. Munro, ed., <i>Life of St Columban</i> (Fleinfach, 1993).

- VF Anonymous, *Vita Sancti Fursei* in Chester Kobos, 'The Structure and Background of *Guthlac A*' for D.Phil (Fordham University, 1972), Appendix C, pp. 212-43.
- VG Felix, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* in B. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge, 1956).
- VM Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Sancti Martini* in C. White, ed., *Early Christian Lives* (London, 1998), pp.129-60.
- VP Jerome, *Vita Sancti Pauli* in C. White, ed., *Early Christian Lives* (London, 1998), pp.71-84.
- VW Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi episcopi* in B. Colgrave, ed., *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1927).

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

The breadth of hagiographical materials which survives relating to the cult of St Guthlac attests to interest in this saint continuing from Anglo-Saxon times through to the late medieval period. The materials themselves, spanning the more accessible artistic and vernacular variations through to highly elaborate Latin texts which could have been understood and appreciated only by the most educated, present the modern historian with a plethora of sources from which one may consider the changing attitudes and beliefs present in the practice of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that consideration of these texts as looking-glasses which represent their authors' beliefs and intentions will offer a fresh approach to the study of a particular tradition but also more broadly, the society which encouraged, believed in, and learned from it. Such a study is indebted to the work of David Rollason, whose work on the St Mildrith materials deliberated the extent to which hagiography was 'related to the political and social contexts in which they were written and read.'<sup>2</sup> Moreover, by focusing on one cult with a diverse dossier of hagiographic materials, such as has survived for St Guthlac, it will become more apparent how alteration to the function of a cult best served its interests over time. It is with these considerations in mind that a holistic approach to the dossier of St Guthlac over an extended period is justified. Nevertheless, using saints' *lives* to determine the mindsets of both author and audience necessitates firstly, an examination of the genre itself and secondly, the purpose of this genre relative to the development of a cult.

Hagiography, literally 'holy writing', is the written expression of the cult of saints. It was usually written to accompany the shrine or relics of a saint in order to preserve a definitive record of their holy life and death and proof, through miracle stories, of their sanctity.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately this account testifies to an individual's ability to act as intercessor between heaven and earth, advertising the saint and their guardian community as worthy objects of patronage and devotion.<sup>4</sup> This explains the variety of genres which classify as hagiography; each was written to fulfil a

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<sup>1</sup> This approach was pioneered by František Graus, *Volk, Herrscher Und Heiliger Im Reich Der Merowinger. Studeien Zur Hagiographie Der Merowingerzeit* (Praha: 1965). Also Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London: 1982).

<sup>2</sup> D.W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: A Study on Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester: 1982), p.3. Also Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: 1988), Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe, eds., *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford: 2002); Catherine Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints " *Early Medieval Europe* 9, no. 1 (2000).

<sup>3</sup> Guy Philippart, "Hagiographes Et Hagiographie, Hagiologes Et Hagiologie; Des Mots Et Des Concepts," in *Hagiographica*, ed. Guy Philippart (Turnhout: 1994 to present), pp. 1-16; Benedicta Ward, "Signs and Wonders: Miracles in the Desert Tradition " in *Signs and Wonders: Saints, Miracles and Prayers from the 4<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Hampshire: 1992), p. 340; Clare Stancliffe, *St Martin and His Hagiographer, History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford: 1983), p. 316.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: 1981), especially pp. 56-7; David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: 1989), p. 89.



particular requirement. A shrine might therefore possess not only several *vitae* or versions of a saint's life and deeds, but also a *translatio* relating the translation of the relics to a grander shrine for the edification of a particular community or a *miracula* recording further post-mortem miracles which had recently occurred. The variety of hagiography which survives testifies to the need, whether politically or religiously motivated, for further identification to and verification of a saint. Thus Gregory of Tours explains that people were more inclined to trust in a relic or shrine if its history was known.<sup>5</sup> A successful cult may be supported by various texts which responded to its needs at a particular point in its development, enhancing a church's importance and revenue through advertising a continued relationship between a guardian community and its heavenly intercessor. Saints were not only revered by their community; sainthood was bestowed upon a holy individual by the community which believed in their *virtus* and lent ecclesiastical authority to that belief.<sup>6</sup> The abundance of saints which were chosen by their community eventually led the papacy to reconsider the relative informality by which canonisation occurred and the papacy's role in its designation. Beginning in the eleventh century, the papacy instituted a *processus canonizationis* by which the curia would determine saintly status, removing the decision-making process from the local communities and replacing it with papal approval that legally assured a saint's prestige.<sup>7</sup> This development ensured a uniformity of procedure for the designation of new saints but was unable to remedy established cults with obscure or questionable legends. The process required an investigation of a saint's life and miracles as proof and not every cult possessed suitable hagiographical accounts.

The purpose of hagiography was to supply a written account which could be reliably used in the celebrations of a saint's death known as their feast day in the church calendar.<sup>8</sup> Hagiography was used in the Latin liturgy; in sermons and as the narrative basis for the vernacular homily of the mass, yet it was also used as private devotional reading by those who could understand the elaborate Latin and scriptural allusions which characterize the genre.<sup>9</sup> Due to these factors, saints' *lives* often served as appropriate reading material for monks and clerics and later, *The Rule of St Benedict* set out Lent as a time for private reading while simultaneously encouraging *lectiones* to be read aloud at meal times. The *Rule* records how the *Lives of the Desert Fathers* was initially used for this purpose, before so many other saints' *lives* came to fulfil this role.<sup>10</sup> It is thus important to note that although hagiography was composed almost

<sup>5</sup> Gregory observes that St Patroclus was neglected because he had no writings; *The Glory of the Martyrs*, 63 cited by Rollason, *Mildrith*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Head, *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (New York: 2000), pp. 13-38 and André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: 1997).

<sup>7</sup> I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge: 1990), pp. 110-3; E.W. Kemp, *Counsel and Consent: Aspects of the Church as exemplified in the history of the English Provincial Synods* (London: 1961), pp. 23-61 and more recently A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Charles W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: 1968), p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Baudouin de Gaiffier, *Études Critiques D'hagiographie Et D'iconologie: Publiée À L'occasion Du 70ieme Anniversaire De L'auteur* (Brussels: 1967), pp. 50-60.

<sup>10</sup> Jean-Claude Guy, ed., *Institutes Cénobitiques/ Jean Cassien* (Paris: 1965), II.5, III.4, IV.12, 17, V.32-4, X.2, XI.3, XII.13; pp. 66, 104, 134-6, 142-4, 240-4, 386, 428, 466; Abbot Parry, ed., *The Rule of St Benedict* (Leominster: 2003), 9, 42,

exclusively by clerics,<sup>11</sup> and commissioned and housed by a saint's guardian community, it was still orally disseminated. A saint's disciples often formed the body of witnesses to miracles stories, showing that even before they were adapted into a written format, these tales had been told and retold beyond the lifespan of the individual. However, the paucity of surviving tales which were witnessed by laymen tends towards a clerical monopoly of not only the writing of hagiography but the survival of tales which were circulated within monastic milieux.<sup>12</sup> The incorporation of hagiography then into a community's history further served to establish its identity and project it to the outside world.<sup>13</sup> The sheer number of hagiographical manuscripts which were preserved and copied by the communities which housed relics testifies to their importance to the development and maintenance of cults during the medieval period.<sup>14</sup>

Due to these functions of hagiography, it becomes worthwhile to consider the intentions of the hagiographer as indicative of the purpose of the text. A hagiographer may explain the reason that they undertook the task of writing a saints' *life* in their introduction; they may also include who commissioned the *vita* or details about the saint's guardian community. So Bishop Athanasius begins his *Life of St Anthony of Egypt* with the statement that he wishes to tell the details about the manner of Anthony's life and death in order to clarify rumours and provide an admirable subject for emulation. 'Indeed, the very act of remembering Anthony is of enormous profit and benefit to me and I am sure that you, listening in wonder, will be keen to follow his commitment: for to know who Anthony was offers us the perfect path to virtue.'<sup>15</sup> Hagiographers desired to clarify a particular version of the legend for their intended audience by stressing certain features to the exclusion or neglect of other details, with the intention of providing the perfect exemplar of holy life.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, they were expected to mould their subject through their choice of conventional schema and through the inclusion of those who had commissioned the work.

The object of hagiography was above all to highlight each saint's likeness to Jesus, for as Gregory of Tours explained, there is only one *vita*, not *vitae sanctorum*, because all saints lived

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48, pp. 31, 70, 77; cited in A. T. Thacker, "The Social and Continental Background to Early Anglo-Saxon Hagiography", submitted for D. Phil., Oxford University (1976), pp. 22-3.

<sup>11</sup> An exception is King Sisebut's *Vita Sancti Desiderii, Episcopi*; Thacker, "Thesis," p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Exceptions have been proposed by Thacker: Gregory of Tours, *De Virtutibus Sancti Martini Episcopi*, III.8, IV.7, 31 and Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, III.19; Ibid, p.24, n. 4 and by Catherine Cubitt: St Oswald in *HE* III.9; St Edwin in *AVGG*, 16-9; St Edmund in Abbo, *Passio sancti Eadmundi*, and other examples; Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints." Also *VG*, XL-XLII, XLV, XLIX, LI.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Ely drew on associations with Æthelthryth to encourage connection between the island, which was frequently under royal ownership, and its surrounding peoples; Janet Fairweather, ed., *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth* (Woodbridge: 2005). Also Martin Biddle, "Archaeology, Architecture, and the Cult of Saints in Anglo-Saxon England," in *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture and Archaeology in Honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor*, ed. L.A.S. Butler and R.K. Morris (London: 1986), pp. 1-31 and Catherine Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative in the cult of early Anglo-Saxon saints', *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: 2000), 29-66.

<sup>14</sup> The work of the Société des Bollandists continues to compile and update bibliographies and analyses of primary hagiographical texts on their website <http://www.kbr.be/~socboll> and in their journal *Analecta Bollandiana*. The *Acta Sanctorum* volumes remain important reference works.

<sup>15</sup> *VA*; Carolinne White, ed., *Early Christian Lives* (London: 1998), 1-71, pp. 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> See Stancliffe's conclusions about Sulpicius Severus' proximity to St Martin. She identifies the use of ideals important to Martin as influencing not only Sulpicius' conversion but the 'ascetic propaganda' of the Gallic church. Above all, Stancliffe argues that it was the individuality of Martin which was emphasized by his hagiographer. Stancliffe, *St Martin*, pp. 318-20.

the life of Christ.<sup>17</sup> This outlook is evident in the earliest hagiography, revealing the extent to which the genre is characterized by textual borrowings from the Bible and other notable hagiographical works which echo a new saint's adherence to earlier, accepted models.<sup>18</sup> Each work of hagiography furthers an archetype of sanctity which undermines unique individual details about each saint in favour of their grand design.<sup>19</sup> This poses problems for the historian intent on reconstructing the historical person of the saint while providing researchers interested in authorial intention or a cult's focus during a particular period with the necessary elements for study.

The rise of hagiography as a genre accompanied the importance and function of saints within both the established and expanding Church. Saints served as exemplary models, first of Christian ascetic devotion and martyrdom, then later, as exceptional members of the church: bishops, abbots and even sometimes monks. The title of saint came to reflect not only that the candidate had lived a holy, virtuous and heroic life but that they had been successfully judged by God and welcomed into the communion of saints.<sup>20</sup> Thus hagiography began to take on not so much of an emphasis on red martyrdom, dying for one's faith, but on the isolated ascetic living which originated in communities inhabiting the Egyptian desert.<sup>21</sup> The *Life of St Anthony of Egypt* was the first text to glorify this kind of living and it became a seminal text for medieval hagiographers long after. As interest in monastic living developed from this movement, and as it spread throughout Western Europe, it began to emphasize confessors of the faith and those individuals who had entered holy orders.<sup>22</sup> Early saints, such as the hugely popular St Martin, drew a careful balance between the ascetic ideals of the past and the communal, pastoral obligations of the church at his time. Moreover as communities like Tours began to advertise their cult to pilgrims, so did the concerns expressed in hagiography begin to better reflect this purpose. For this reason it is worthwhile to consider how and why each community adapted its particular requirements into existing hagiographical forms.

It was the models defined by Sts. Anthony and Martin and others which were introduced to the British Isles by the first missionaries in the sixth and seventh centuries. In England alone, Irish missionaries settling in Northumbria, a Gaulish bishop in East Anglia and Roman priests in Kent all contributed unique mentalities to the Anglo-Saxons' absorption of Christianity.<sup>23</sup> Relics

<sup>17</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Liber Vitae Patrum*, prefatio; Thacker, "Thesis", p. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Neil Wright defines four techniques to distinguish: 1) Quotation - several consecutive words or an opening formula which acknowledges debt; 2) Imitation - literary adaption or close verbal parallel; 3) Echo- a parallel beyond vocabulary suggested by context, vocabulary, imagery, metaphor or metre; 4) Borrowing- a blanket term for all of the above. Neil Wright, *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Hampshire: 1995), pp.162-4.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Michel Picard, "Bede, Adomnán, and the Writing of History," *Peritia* 3 (1984); Clare Stancliffe, "Bede, Wilfred, and the Irish," in *Jarrow Lecture* (St Paul's Church, Jarrow: 2003). Both studies discuss how authorial intention evidences variant perspectives of religious discord.

<sup>20</sup> Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (London: 1962), pp. 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> Clare E. Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville (Cambridge: 1982).

<sup>22</sup> Head, *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, pp. 13-38 gives a good overview.

<sup>23</sup> James Campbell, "Observations of the Conversion of England," in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: 1986), pp. 69-84; Clare E. Stancliffe, "Kings and Conversion: Some Comparisons between the Roman Mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 14 (1980), pp.59-94; Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 ed. (London: 1991), pp.13-39.

and tales about saints had been introduced as early as the first Roman missionaries as a tangible link to the intercessory powers of saints and by extension, God.<sup>24</sup> So it is understandable that as the Anglo-Saxon church began to grow and expand, so did the interests of the first bishops and their aristocratic patrons in acquiring and displaying relics.<sup>25</sup> Eventually, England came to desire saints and relics of its own. The first saints in Anglo-Saxon England were drawn from the saintly missionary-bishops, martyred Christian kings and noble abbesses of its formative years. Many tales of their virtuous lives and miracles were recorded by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* although Bede and other clerical authors had already begun to compose Latin saints' *vitae* in emulation of the hagiographical models which monastic milieux and pilgrimages had brought the Anglo-Saxons into contact with.<sup>26</sup> There survive from Anglo-Saxon England approximately a dozen hagiographical texts which were written about saints who were venerated locally yet were adapted by their hagiographers to the archetypes of sanctity and form found in continental exemplars.<sup>27</sup> It has been established that all of these works were composed by clerics in a short period between the late-seventh and mid-eighth centuries as these works are the surviving corpus of materials produced prior to the Viking attacks which halted scholarly activity of this kind for much of the ninth century.

The earliest surviving Latin hagiography from Anglo-Saxon England was the anonymous *Life of St Cuthbert*, commissioned by Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne in 698.<sup>28</sup> This was followed by an anonymous *Life of Gregory the Great* written at Whitby in the mid-eighth century.<sup>29</sup> Stephen of Ripon then borrowed heavily from St Cuthbert's *vita* for his *Life of St Wilfrid* which was commissioned by his abbot Tatberht of Ripon and by Bishop Acca of Hexham.<sup>30</sup> This was followed by an anonymous *Life of Abbot Ceolfrith* for the community at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow,<sup>31</sup> and by Bede's transformation of the first *Life of St Cuthbert* into a metrical version for John the priest.<sup>32</sup> Bede then created another prose version of the *Life of St Cuthbert* for Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne; a prose version of Paulinus of Nola's *Life of St Felix* and a revision of Archbishop

<sup>24</sup> Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 82 and David Rollason, "The Shrines of Saints in Later Anglo-Saxon England: Distribution and Significance," in *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture and Archaeology in Honour of H.M. Taylor*, ed. L.A.S. Butler and R.K. Morris (London: 1986).

<sup>25</sup> John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: 2005); D. Rollason, "Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria," in *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 1994 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Benjamin Thompson (Stamford: 1999).

<sup>26</sup> Benedicta Ward, "Miracles and History: A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories Used by Bede," in *Signs and Wonders: Saints, Miracles and Prayers from the 4<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Hampshire: 1992), p.71. Bede's records that Benedict Biscop formulated his rule from 17 different monastic rules that he had learned in his travels exemplifies the possible hybrids; "Historia Abbatum Auctore Beda," in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford: 1896), pp. 374-5.

<sup>27</sup> Bertram Colgrave, "The Earliest Saints' Lives Written in England," *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1958).

<sup>28</sup> Bertram Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives of St Cuthbert; a Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (New York: 1969).

<sup>29</sup> Bertram Colgrave, ed., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby* (Cambridge: 1985); Alan Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998).

<sup>30</sup> Bertram Colgrave, ed., *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge: 1927), D.P. Kirby, "Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the *Life of Wilfrid*," *English Historical Review* 98 (1983).

<sup>31</sup> P. Hunter Blair, ed., *Vita S. Ceolfridi, The World of Bede* (Cambridge: 1990).

<sup>32</sup> Michael Lapidge, "Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*," in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to Ad 1200*, ed. Gerald Bonner, Clare Stancliffe, and David Rollason (Woodbridge: 1989).

Theodore's *passio of St Anastasius* all around 720.<sup>33</sup> This was followed by Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* in the 730s, by an anonymous verse account of the *Miracles of St Nynia* and by the similarly anonymous *Metrical Calendar of York*, both produced by students' of Alcuin at York between 754-66.<sup>34</sup>

It is representative of scholarship on this period that Michael Lapidge's *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899* opens with the statement: 'Most of the literature surviving from Anglo-Saxon England was composed and transmitted by Christian churchmen'.<sup>35</sup> Saints' *lives* were the by-product of Latin religious scholarship, and have consequently been viewed exclusively as the domain of monastic schools. The other defining trend regarding the surviving corpus of *vitae* is that they deal almost exclusively with subjects who were bishops or abbots and were therefore commissioned by the community with whom they were associated. Indeed, dedications of saints' *lives* and the links between institutions have been extensively mapped by Alan Thacker in his 1976 thesis and to a lesser extent by Bertram Colgrave in his editions of these saints' *lives* which were published between the 1920s and the 1960s.<sup>36</sup> These notable works and others have highlighted each hagiographer's source indebtedness and by extension, the conventions that were expected. It tends to follow that only a monastic audience would be able to understand the Latin language and style and appreciate the meticulous allusions and borrowings that were standard conventions of this genre. Clearly these texts could be accessed and understood by this kind of audience; they could be privately or publicly read as they are or integrated into the liturgy. Yet what of a wider audience – pilgrims to the shrine or a local congregation attending mass – is there any way of determining if Anglo-Saxon hagiography had a wider audience than source studies would suggest?

The pride and reverence a community or saint's *familia* might hold for their patron might be evident in the lavish translations, shrine trappings or rituals which were described in hagiography. These tools may also provide a glance into how a saint engaged those outside of this community as decorations and celebrations may be interpreted as enticing pilgrims or patrons to the shrine; these were particularly prevalent as church reforms and political regimes sought to provide continuity between the old and the new. Some miracle stories even describe the different levels of society to whom an individual would appeal; a saintly abbot might be venerated by later generations within his own house while a king may draw pilgrims from the aristocracy. Other miracle stories might describe the various cures, prophesies or protections that

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<sup>33</sup> Bede, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti Two Lives of St Cuthbert; a Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (New York: 1969), Werner von Jaager, ed., *Bedas Metrische Vita Sancta Cuthberti* (Leipzig: 1935), R.C. Love, 'Hagiography' in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge et al. (Oxford: 1999), pp. 226-8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, pp. 226-8, P. Ciccarese, *Visioni Dell'adlila in Occidente: Fonti, Modelli, Testi* (Florence: 1981).

<sup>35</sup> Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899* (London: 1996).

<sup>36</sup> Bertram Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: 1940); Bertram Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge: 1956); Thacker, "Thesis."

a saint was known for, giving an indication of the powers which were desirable in uncertain times. These aspects may contribute to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon beliefs regarding saints.

Over the last thirty years there has been some development with regard to the relationship between saints' cults and the average populace. Alan Thacker, John Blair, Catherine Cubitt and others have argued that saints 'transcended the boundaries' set in place and administered by church authorities regarding ritual, confession and penance.<sup>37</sup> For evidence, they draw attention to the few details which describe popular devotions to saints; Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* records how the public carried off the earth from the sites where King Oswald and Bishop Hæddi died to protect their crops and livestock.<sup>38</sup> Stephen's *Life of St Wilfrid* tells how a woman concealed the fact that her child was dead so that the Bishop would still give it baptism.<sup>39</sup> The Anonymous author of the *Life of Gregory the Great* records how it was revealed to the priest Trimma in a dream that the *ceorl* Teoful knew the whereabouts of the martyred King Edwin.<sup>40</sup> And survivals such as a tradition of mixing seed corn with St Eadgith's image are used to support arguments of wider cultural penetration.<sup>41</sup> Morris and Cubitt argue that popular piety was embedded in the landscape, leading to localized traditions of sanctity.<sup>42</sup> While only a few short references to popular practices in Anglo-Saxon hagiography survive, it is important to remember that these few would have remained unknown if they had not been recorded by clerics in Latin hagiographical texts.<sup>43</sup> Gurevich is quick to remind scholars that 'only in a certain symbiosis with learned tradition could medieval popular tradition exist'.<sup>44</sup> Thus when Alcuin complains that people 'wish to have sacred things round their necks, not in their hearts, and with these holy words of God or the relics of the saints, go to their filthy acts',<sup>45</sup> he is unable to view this kind of devotion as evidencing the successful integration of relics into popular beliefs. Here it should be clear that there is a distinction between what Karen Jolly has referred to as 'popular and formal' aspects of religion.<sup>46</sup> Like her study of the integration of elf charms into parish priest

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<sup>37</sup> Catherine Cubitt, "Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: 2002), pp. 423-54; Alan Thacker, "Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England," in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester: 1992), pp. 168-9.

<sup>38</sup> HE III.30, IV. 13, V.18; Cubitt views these kinds of devotions as evidence of low status piety, in comparison to those evidenced at Bamburgh and Bardney; Cubitt, "Universal and Local," pp. 426-7.

<sup>39</sup> VW XVIII; referenced by Sarah Foot, "By Water in the Spirit": The Administration of Baptism in Early Anglo-Saxon England," in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester: 1992), p. 183.

<sup>40</sup> AVGG XVIII. Also Lantfred's later account of the Smith's vision of St Swithun. In both stories, the retrieval of relics is initiated by a layman and a priest and in both, the heavenly visitor must appear more than once to reprove an individual for not following his commands the first time; M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Minsters of Winchester and the Cult of St Swithun*, vol. IV.2, *Winchester Studies* (Oxford: 2003), 4.2, pp. 260-5.

<sup>41</sup> John Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Oxford: 1994); John Blair, "A Saint for Every Minster? Local Cults in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: 2002), p. 477.

<sup>42</sup> Richard Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London: 1989); Cubitt, "Universal and Local," pp. 423-54.

<sup>43</sup> John Blair, "St Cuthman's," *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 135 (1997); Cubitt, "Universal and Local," p. 428.

<sup>44</sup> Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. Janos M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, *Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture* (Cambridge: 1997), p. 38.

<sup>45</sup> Cited by John Blair and Richard Sharpe, "Introduction," in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester: 1992), p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England; Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: 1996), p. 34.

books, there may be some textual evidence that popular concepts or devotions were integrated into the highly conventional and static genres of hagiography.

Furthermore, reintegration or acceptance of popular practices reveals how the church harnessed the popularity of some saints in order to advertise the benefits of their particular cult. Certainly this happened under new regimes in Anglo-Saxon England. Under the Benedictine reforms, relic cults were harnessed by the new cathedral-monasteries to the extent that many obscure or forgotten 'saints' were revived in order to enhance existing collections.<sup>47</sup> Instituting devotions to saints ensured continuity with past ideals while improving access to saints' cults through new translations, shrines, and vernacular writings increased lay involvement at shrines.<sup>48</sup> The Norman ecclesiastics who then moved into the leadership of these houses in the eleventh and twelfth centuries utilized the same method by continuing to venerate the remains of Anglo-Saxon saints in their new cathedrals. A comparative approach towards the hagiography written after the tenth century may reflect what aspects of a cult were incompatible or outdated in light of these societal and political changes. It may also define the appeal of a particular saint through observations that some characteristics may remain intact in later versions, while others may have been abandoned under new administrative control. Ultimately, a cult's trajectory indicates how a community successfully propagated its' cults' legend(s) or failed.

It is likewise important to remember that since hagiography was also used in the liturgy, as the basis for sermons or homilies, Rogation day processions, and as the narrative inspiration for sculpture, stained glass and panel paintings, it existed not only for a literate ecclesiastical audience but also for a public one with a reception as diverse as the origins of pilgrims who might have visited the shrine.<sup>49</sup> Certain elements of hagiography such as the rewards of virtuous life, visions designed to emphasize repentance, and the proof, provided by miracles, that God was still present in the world must have been stressed through these media due to their widespread benefits in managing the spiritual life of lay people.<sup>50</sup> Certainly, Irish hagiography incorporates folktale and magic to create saints with indigenous appeal.<sup>51</sup> Hagiography could have been disseminated through a variety of visual and oral means in order to encourage and manage spirituality through the medium of saints.

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<sup>47</sup> D.W. Rollason, "Lists of Saints' Resting-Places in Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), pp. 61-93 uses the *Secgan* to plot interest in saints' cults by identifying the additions of continental saints and churchmen during later periods.

<sup>48</sup> Francesca Tinti, "Introduction," in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Francesca Tinti (Woodbridge: 2005), pp. 1-16; Michael Lapidge, "The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England," in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: 1991).

<sup>49</sup> Consider the panels on the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the 'Dream of the Rood' Tradition* (London: 2005). Also Cynthia Hahn, "Picturing the Text: Narrative in the Life of the Saints," *Art History* 13 (1990).

<sup>50</sup> Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western Europe, 600-800* (Cambridge: 1990), pp. 243-71; Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Jersey: 1983).

<sup>51</sup> Dorothy Ann Bray, "Miracles and Wonders in the Composition of the Early *Lives* of the Early Irish Saints," in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: 2003); Doris Edel, *The Celtic West and Europe: Studies in Celtic Literature and the Early Irish Church* (Dublin: 2001), pp. 197-207; Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Kildare: 1990).

Yet how much does the Latin hagiography itself reflect or deflect widespread interest in saints? Well, Alcuin's notable explanation of the reason that he composed multiple works on the subject of St Willibrod was so that there was a version in verse; for private study, one in prose; for use in church, and one suitable for preaching to the people, may evidence that more accessible forms had ideally existed.<sup>52</sup> There are indeed elaborate metrical verse *lives* surviving from Anglo-Saxon England which differ markedly from their prose counterparts in the presumed Latin abilities of their audiences.<sup>53</sup> While Alcuin's explanation may suggest the purpose of these genres, it would be difficult to presume, on the basis of language, that any of the surviving hagiographical texts from Anglo-Saxon England were composed for 'public use'. Yet the possibility that there were originally other forms in simpler Latin and even the vernacular would increase accessibility to these legends, especially since knowledge of Latin appears to have deteriorated even amongst even the clerical orders as early as Bede's lifetime.<sup>54</sup> It has long been noted that by the time that Ælfric (c.950-1010) was writing his vernacular *Catholic Homilies* of pure doctrine *con simplex locutio* for an uneducated audience – he remarks that his own teacher had been uneducated in Latin.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, references to the lowly cowherd Cædmon who could turn biblical stories into song and the venerable Bede's own vernacular death song provide some indication that translation and familiarity with Old English conventions was noted. Perhaps these instances hint that such ability was even more prevalent than these few testimonials would have us think.

Subsequently it will prove useful to analyze hagiographical texts for evidence of changing emphases in their narratives. Popular concepts of saints intermingled with cultural ideas regarding magic, belief, and myth making it possible to consider anomalous elements in saints' *lives* the result of wider cultural penetration, though it would be difficult to determine whether this may have been due to the deliberate efforts of a hagiographer to manage a legend or whether this may simply have seeped in due to the unconscious efforts of a 'fringe' cleric.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, stories circulated orally within monastic centres may have been further shaped by materials which had been studied or committed to memory.<sup>57</sup> In fact, a recent study of Breton saints' cults argues

<sup>52</sup> Cited by Rollason, *Mildrith*, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> For example, von Jaeger, ed., *Bede's Metrical Vita Sancta Cuthberti*.

<sup>54</sup> This point surfaced in discussions of pastoral care. Clofesho canons 14, 23, 26, 27 and Bede's Letter to Ecgbert are usually cited; Thacker, "Monks, Preaching," pp. 162-4. Consider too Helen Gittos theory that CCC 4222 was used as a portable priest book and that other books of this kind did not survive because of their inexpensive, light-weight construction and vernacular, un-sound contents; Helen Gittos, "Is There Evidence for the Liturgy of Parish Churches in Late Anglo-Saxon England? The Red Book of Darley and the Status of Old English," in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Francesca Tinti (Woodbridge: 2005), pp. 63-82.

<sup>55</sup> It has been argued that vernacular homilies and hagiographies were the result of a desire for edifying, heroic material at the time of the Benedictine revival; Peter Clemoes, "Ælfric," in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. Eric G. Stanley (Melbourne: 1966), pp. 189, 193 and Rosemary Woolf, "Saints' Lives," in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. Eric Gerald Stanley (Nelson: 1966), pp. 39-40.

<sup>56</sup> Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays* (Oxford: 1979); P. Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in R. T. Farrel ed., *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, 1978), pp. 39-42.

<sup>57</sup> Thacker, "Thesis", p. 25 and Catherine Cubitt, "Memory and Narrative in the Cult of Early Anglo-Saxon Saints," *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: 2000). Contrastingly, Thacker's analysis of Gregorian texts suggests that they worked from earlier written-down versions; Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries."



that oral traditions were in themselves 'accepted, authentic and authoritative', not un-toward and doctrinally unsound.<sup>58</sup> This approach makes it possible to consider how different emphases, revealed through source studies, might reflect changes in the context of a cult.

This direction takes its inspiration from the approach adopted by Patrick Wormald in his analysis of socially relevant expressions of Christianity in his article titled 'Bede, *Beowulf* and the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy'.<sup>59</sup> In this work, Wormald encourages the reader to consider the interests and values of the warrior classes and how much more relevant the Christian elements in the poem *Beowulf* would have been to them, when compared to Bede's idealized *Ecclesiastical History*. His comparisons serve to highlight the error in dismissing idiosyncrasies and flaws in texts as unrepresentative; indeed, he even suggests that they may present a more realistic view of society than anomalies like Bede would. His methodology is likewise indebted to Dorothy Whitelock's earlier work which considered the mindset of the *Beowulf* poem's audience. Her theories of how this text might have been read and understood have continued to inspire audience studies of this poem and other Anglo-Saxon texts.<sup>60</sup> It is with these approaches and questions in mind that this thesis reconsiders the dossier of St Guthlac of Crowland.

### **The content of the Guthlac legend**

The dossier of hagiographical materials which focus on the life, death and miracles of St Guthlac of Crowland was begun within fifteen years of Guthlac's death and was developed and reworked long into the fourteenth century.<sup>61</sup> These materials have been thoroughly catalogued as early as the seventeenth century, though Jane Roberts' 'Inventory' is the most comprehensive.<sup>62</sup> A closer inspection reveals that while the legend was expanded and developed, there were specific details regarding St Guthlac that must have been integral to the character of this cult for they were, in some measure, always retained. Assembled they provide a chronology of the key points which altered the course of Guthlac's career. It is important to remember that this study in no way endeavours to verify details about a historical Guthlac, as Susan E. Wilson has attempted

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<sup>58</sup> Julia M.H. Smith, "Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany, C. 850-1250," *Speculum* 65 (1990).

<sup>59</sup> Patrick Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy," in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. R.T. Farrel (1978).

<sup>60</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford: 1957); Eugene Green, *Anglo-Saxon Audiences* (New York: 2001).

<sup>61</sup> Dating will be discussed at length in the next chapter. However, it is important to set out that the earliest confirmed work on St Guthlac is Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* (c.730-40). The last works composed upon this subject were certainly the entry on him in Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* (c.1300-42/4) and the pseudo-Ingulph's *Historia Croilandensis* (a later rewrite of 12<sup>th</sup> c. Abbot Ingulph's chronicle); presented by J. Roberts, "An Inventory of Early Guthlac Materials," *Medieval Studies* 32 (1970), pp. 193-233.

<sup>62</sup> J. Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum* (Antwerp: 1675), II April 10<sup>th</sup>, pp. 37-60 contains all early Latin legends up to Orderic Vitalis' *Abbrevatio*. Also Walter de Gray Birch, ed., *Memorials of St Guthlac of Crowland* (Wisbech: 1881); Whitney French Bolton, "The Middle English and Latin Poems of Saint Guthlac" (D.Phil unpublished, Princeton University, 1954); Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*; Roberts, "Inventory"; John Blair, "A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and John Blair (Oxford: 2002), pp. 521, 537, 552.

in her study of *The Life and Afterlife of St John of Beverley*.<sup>63</sup> This approach is riddled with difficulties as hagiographers were either unknowledgeable or unconcerned with facts about their subjects.<sup>64</sup> As mentioned above, most hagiography was written down long past the lifetime of the saintly candidate making it already prone to the omissions and elaborations which shape oral traditions. Rather, this study intends to identify the features of the hagiographical subject Guthlac in order to later consider their appeal. Thus it will be useful to set out the legend chronologically at the outset.

It is recorded that Guthlac was born within the territory of the Middle Angles during the reign of Æthelred of Mercia.<sup>65</sup> The year of his birth has been calculated as 674 based on the regnal years of Æthelred and Guthlac's age at death. At this time, this territory was ruled by the Mercians so it is not unreasonable that his parents, as Mercian nobility, were settled there. Furthermore, the legend records that Penwalh, Guthlac's father, was descended from Icel, great-grandson of Offa I making Guthlac of not only noble, but royal descent.<sup>66</sup> During labour, his mother Tette experienced many miraculous portents of his future greatness. While many of these are hagiographical convention, the red-gold hand of God marking the cross in front of the door is unique.<sup>67</sup> This sign was interpreted to manifest the infant's future glory and so the child was christened with the name Guthlac, from the tribe of the Guthlacingas, meaning 'the rewards of war' and instructed to be a nobleman in his father's hall.<sup>68</sup>

The heroic tales that he learned as part of his upbringing eventually inspired him to take up arms and gather followers, and Guthlac appears to have enjoyed nine years as a warlord. Various texts describe his successes during this stage in his life; how he amassed followers from other nations and races, devastated his foes and their settlements, and amassed immense booty from his conquests.<sup>69</sup> Incidentally, some versions also mention that Guthlac understood the British language because he had been exiled amongst them; a statement which some scholars view as placing Guthlac amongst the border conflicts between Mercia and Wales that stretched into the eighth century.<sup>70</sup> Collectively, these details imply how important Guthlac's military prowess and the breadth of his exploits were to the legend.

<sup>63</sup> Susan E. Wilson, *The Life and Afterlife of St John of Beverley: The Evolution of the Cult of an Anglo-Saxon Saint* (Aldershot: 2006).

<sup>64</sup> Rollason, *Mildrith*, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> VG, I; Frank Merry Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, third ed., XV vols., vol. II, *The Oxford History of England* (Oxford: 1971), pp. 42-4; OEVG, I; Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac* (London: 1848), pp. 8-11. Marjorie Chibnall, ed., *The Ecclesiastical History of Ordericus Vitalis*, VI vols., vol. II (Oxford: 1969), IV, pp. 324-5.

<sup>66</sup> VG, II; OEVG, I.

<sup>67</sup> VG, V-VII; Günter Kotzor, ed., *Das Altenglische Martyrologium*, II vols., vol. II (München: 1981), 63 April 11<sup>th</sup>, pp. 52-3. In *Guthlac B*, the poet causes the hand of God to visit when Guthlac is dying rather than at his birth; *GB*, II.1317-24; Jane Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, ed. Jane Roberts (Oxford: 1979), p. 122.

<sup>68</sup> VG, X-I; OEVG, II; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 324-325.

<sup>69</sup> VG, XVI-VIII; OEVG, II; GA, II. 93-100; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 85-6.

<sup>70</sup> VG, XXXIV; OEVG, VI. Colgrave quotes Whitelock's theory that Guthlac's exile might have been connected to concerns that Guthlac might strive for the throne; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 2-3; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 211, n. 2; Barbara Yorke, "Æthelbald, Offa and the Patronage of Nunneries," *Æthelbald and Offa: Two Eighth-Century Kings of Mercia. Papers from a Conference held in Manchester in 2000*, Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 383 (2005), p. 44. Meaney suggests that this episode was a 'genuine flashback' to Guthlac's former career; Audrey L.

During a time of peace, Guthlac began to reconsider the deaths of those same heroes and kings of his race which had motivated his own career. The implications of their deaths led him to reconsider his own path and he decided instead to reform his life by forgoing the wealth and glory he had formerly coveted in favour of dedicating his life to God.<sup>71</sup> So at the age of twenty four, Guthlac abandoned his family, homeland, and career and journeyed to the monastery at Repton, where he was tonsured. For two years Guthlac trained as a cleric there until he again was influenced by stories, this time by the *lives* of the Desert Fathers, so that he desires to become a hermit.<sup>72</sup> After obtaining permission from his superiors, Guthlac then made his way towards the fenlands which were known as an inhospitable and desolate landscape.

Once there Guthlac became intrigued by local Tatwine's descriptions of a particularly remote site known for its demonic inhabitants and upon inspection, he fell immediately in love with the scenery. Descriptions of legendary Crowland have been important in emphasizing not only Guthlac's asceticism but his love of nature. Crowland has been described as an island surrounded by marshes on which there is a small hill surrounded by trees or a ruined barrow beside a cistern where Guthlac decides to construct his habitation.<sup>73</sup> Other traditions relate that Crowland had been given to Guthlac by Æthelbald of Mercia for the foundation of a monastery, which was then constructed near to his hermitage.<sup>74</sup> However, this foundation legend appears only in post-Norman texts which coincide with its need to secure an ancient date in light of land disputes with nearby settlements.<sup>75</sup> The only constant feature in descriptions of Crowland was the desolate fenland landscape which provided an equivalent Egyptian desert for Guthlac and his successors.

In all versions of the legend, the demons who had been the sole inhabitants of the site until Guthlac's arrival become determined to terrorize him into abandoning Crowland. He is bombarded by emotional and physical attacks designed to break his resolve.<sup>76</sup> The penultimate attack, which is a commonplace, has Guthlac being beaten and dragged by the demons to the portal of Hell where his life is threatened.<sup>77</sup> He is victorious due to his trust in God and the help of

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Meaney, "Felix's Life of Guthlac- History or Hagiography?" *Aethelbald and Offa: Two eighth century kings of Northumbria* (2005), pp. 40-1, 45.

<sup>71</sup> VG, XVIII-XX; OEVG, II; GA, II. 93-139; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 86-7; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 324-7.

<sup>72</sup> VG, XXIV; OEVG, II. Also B.P. Kurtz, "From St Anthony to St Guthlac: A Study in Biography," *University of California Publications in Modern Philology* XII (1925-6); Thomas D. Hill, "Drawing the Demon's Sting: A Note on a Traditional Motif in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*," 23, no. 9 (1976).

<sup>73</sup> VG, XXIV-VIII; GA, II. 133-9, 722-51; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 87; OEVG, III- IV.

<sup>74</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 338-41; George Warner, *The Harley Roll* (Oxford: 1928), roundel 18; Peter de Blois, *De Munificencia Æthelbaldi* in Carl Horstmann, ed., *Nova Legenda Anglie: As Collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave, and Others, and First Printed, with New Lives, by Wynkyn De Worde* (Oxford: 1901), vol. II, pp. 718-9; Henry de Avranches *MVG*, II. 1616-67 in Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 104-6; Henry T. Riley, ed., *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers* (London: 1854).

<sup>75</sup> For example, Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 257, 275, 287-8, 297, 320, 330, 336, 343-4, etc. Also see the introduction to Nicholas Proney and John Cox, eds., *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-86* (London: 1986). The disputes and their influence on later versions of the legend will be discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>76</sup> VG, XIX-XXX, XXXIV-VI; OEVG, IV-VIII; GA, II. 140-551, GB II. 894-915; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 87-99, 110; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 326-9; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 704-707, 708; *MVG*, II. 302-913.

<sup>77</sup> VG, XXXI-III; OEVG, V; GA, II. 552-751; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 100-5; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 326-9; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 704-6.

his spiritual counsellor, St Bartholomew, who orders the demons to desist. Some versions have Guthlac's journey to hell as his final trial.<sup>78</sup> His steadfastness to God in these versions earns him a release from his sufferings and Bartholomew escorts the worthy saint to heaven. Other later versions record that Guthlac was presented with a scourge at this time by Bartholomew for his own defence.<sup>79</sup> Regardless of the ending, the preponderance of battles envisioned in physical, militaristic language and imagery emphasizes Guthlac's role as *miles Christi* as essential to his isolation, location and attainment of sanctity.

The versions which continue the narrative past Guthlac's trip to Hell relate the proofs that he has obtained spiritual majority. The birds and fishes which surround him obey his call; he begins to prophesize about various matters and is able to heal infirmities.<sup>80</sup> As a result of these miraculous occurrences, Guthlac's fame spreads resulting in an influx of visitors to Crowland including notably the exiled Mercian king Æthelbald and Bishop Headda, who ordains Guthlac and consecrates his oratory.<sup>81</sup> In most of the versions in which Guthlac returns to Crowland he is not alone at his hermitage; this fulfils the obvious narrative requirement of witnesses. In particular an attendant named Becel, who has already dedicated himself to serve the hermit, provides the witness to Guthlac's noble death and his last requests.<sup>82</sup>

In this tradition Guthlac foresees his own end and nobly endures its discomforts with the same steadfastness that he endured demonic attacks. The release of his soul is heralded by miraculous events which betoken his welcome into the communion of saints. Moreover, these *signa* are importantly witnessed by Becel who is further entrusted to ensure that news of Guthlac's death reaches his sister Pega. Undoubtedly the exchange between the bereaved messenger and Guthlac's sister supplies the most emotive dialogue in the narrative and has even been developed exclusively in one surviving version.<sup>83</sup> Subsequently Pega makes the journey to Crowland and takes charge of her brother's old hermitage. It is she who inters the remains in his oratory and then encourages devotions to her brother by having him unearthed in the company of witnesses one year later to reveal his uncorrupted state. There are even some surviving tales in which Pega administers Guthlac's relics to pilgrims but sometimes stories involving Pega diverge into a legend in their own right.<sup>84</sup> In this way, the versions which are concerned with Guthlac's

<sup>78</sup> Paul E. Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII* (Toronto: 1981), homily XXIII, ll. 117-9, p. 99; Lewis E. Nicholson, ed., *The Vercelli Book Homilies Translated from the Anglo-Saxon* (Lanham: 1991), p. 60; GA, ll. 722-818, Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 104-7.

<sup>79</sup> Harley Roll, roundels VIII, IX; Henry de Avranches, *MVG*, ll. 526-40.

<sup>80</sup> VG, XXXVII-XLIX; OEVG, IX-XVI; GA, ll. 722-51, GB, ll. 878-93, 916-31, Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 104-5, 109-11; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 328-33; Harley Roll, plate X; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 709-15; *MVG*, ll. 952-1250.

<sup>81</sup> VG, XL, XLII, XLV, XLVII, XLIX, pp. 124-7, 130-133, 138-141, 144-7, 148-151; OEVG, XI, XIII, XVI, XVII, XIX, pp. 54-7, 60-1, 66-9, 70-5, 76-9; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 330-5; Harley Roll, roundels XI, XII; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 712-4; *MVG*, ll. 1159-1218, 1239-1314.

<sup>82</sup> VG XXXV, L, LI, pp. 110-3, 150-64; OEVG, VII, XX, pp. 44-7, 78-89; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 328-9, 334-337. In GB, the attendant is unnamed perhaps for a variety of reasons which will be discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>83</sup> GB, ll. 1317-77, Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 122-4. The reason for their lifetime separation is provided much later in the legend's chronology by Henry des Avranches' *MVG*, ll. 678-726.

<sup>84</sup> VG, L-I, LIII; OEVG, XX, XXII; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 334-9; Harley Roll XVI. Pega is not attributed with Guthlac's elevation by Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 716-7 though she is again by Henry des Avranches,

death keenly promote his continued involvement in emulation of the pattern followed by other successful cults.<sup>85</sup>

The variety of hagiography which followed this pattern or developed elements of it over the centuries makes it possible to ascertain adaptations which were deliberate authorial choices designed to respond to different stages in its development. As has already been noted, many scholars have already identified the corpus of materials which relate to the subject of St Guthlac. However, scholarship on individual texts of this dossier has tended to polarize between source studies or textual appreciation on one hand and an exploitation of textual details for historical information on the other.<sup>86</sup> So there are now useful modern analyses and editions of Felix's *vita*, the anonymous Guthlac poems of the Exeter Book and Vercelli homily XXIII but little on, for example, the Old English translation of Felix's work because it has been considered unoriginal.<sup>87</sup>

While narrowing the scope has led to some valuable insights, it has equally led to some misguided interpretations as to the value of 'less original' materials. For instance, Alan Thacker's dismissive statement that the Exeter book poems and the translation of Felix's *vita* 'contribute little, if any new material' to our knowledge about Crowland fails to take into account the valuable questions of why these texts were composed in the first place and who such revisions of the legend might have appealed to – his very reason for undertaking a comparative source analysis of Felix's *Life*.<sup>88</sup> Roberts' work has lately remedied some of this limited approach however circular arguments questioning the indebtedness of vernacular texts to Latin ones have also dogged scholarship on this dossier for too long.<sup>89</sup> For this reason, the debate surrounding the dating, origins and provenance of these materials will be outlined in chapter 2 so that this thesis may proceed to reconsider the progression and deviations of the legend over time, and in response to

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MVG, II. 1498-1522. In *GB*, no name is given to Guthlac's sister; see n.45 concerning Becel although the pseudo-Ingulph describes how Pega makes a pilgrimage to Rome where her reputation preceded her; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 8. Consideration of the Pega legend has been undertaken recently by Avril Lumley Prior, "Fact and/or Folklore? The Case for St Pega of Peakirk," *Northamptonshire Past & Present* 61 (2008).

<sup>85</sup> Numerous post-mortem miracles were recorded in the *Miracula* and *Translatio* which were part of Douai Public Library MS 852, folios 32v-38, 38-46v, which was a Crowland manuscript; Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum*, April 10<sup>th</sup>, pp. 37-60. Also, Bertram Colgrave, "St Guthlac of Crowland: A Durham Incident," *Durham University Journal, New Series* XV, no. 3 (1954).

<sup>86</sup> For example, compare Robert E. Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives: A Study in Oral Discourse and the Iconography of Style* (Toronto: 1985) to George Henderson, "The Imagery of St Guthlac of Crowland" (paper presented at the England in the 13th century: Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium, Woodbridge, 1985).

<sup>87</sup> There are only two editions of the Old English translation of Felix's *Life*, both were published over a century ago: Paul Gonser, *Das Angelsächsische Prosa-Leben Des Hl. Guthlac* (Heidelberg: 1909); Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*. Interest in this text is due to the efforts of Jane Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature: The Case of Guthlac of Crowland," in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. Carol A. Farr Michelle P. Brown (London: 2001) and Jane Roberts, "Guthlac of Crowland and the Seals of the Cross," in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer, and Karen Louise Jolly (Woodbridge: 2006).

<sup>88</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," p. 281.

<sup>89</sup> Gordon Hall Gerould, 'The Old English Poems on St Guthlac and their Latin source', *Modern Language Notes*, 32.2 (1917), pp. 77-89; Laurence K. Shook, 'The Burial Mound in *Guthlac A*', *Modern Philology*, 58.1 (1960), pp. 1-10; Jane Roberts, 'A Metrical Examination of the Poems *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 71 (1971), pp. 91-137; Daniel G. Calder, 'Guthlac A and Guthlac B: Some Discriminations', *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: essays in appreciation of John C. McGalliard*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame: 1975), pp. 65-80; Manish Sharma, 'A reconstruction of the structure of *Guthlac A*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philosophy*, 101 (2002), pp. 185-200.

its changing context, which I feel diminishes recognition of why interest in this particular saint was encouraged or perpetuated.

This thesis will therefore examine the dossier on St Guthlac holistically from its origins in the eighth century to its summit in the thirteenth century. Chapter 3 will consider the function of Crowland to determine how changes to the site might have influenced the hagiography on St Guthlac while chapter 4 will proceed to consider the dossier itself and how the legend was adapted in response to the changing contexts discussed in chapter 3. Chapters 5 and 6 respectively consider the heroic and visionary aspects of the Guthlac legend as two elements which reflect embedded values and interests of Anglo-Saxon society, to identify the popular appeal of this cult.

The overall purpose will be to consider the creation, dissemination, interaction and reception of these texts through consideration of each author's development of their subject for their patron(s) and audience. This approach raises some newly reassessed questions: What sources and models were important to the hagiographers/poets? Did attitudes to St Guthlac change? How do these choices compare to other contemporaneous hagiographies? Or even, what was the purpose of new versions or variations; did they all have the same purpose? And what effect does Crowland's location and function have on the production of hagiography? It is therefore important to examine what the Guthlac texts are, how they are similar or dissimilar to comparable models and how the saint was represented from one text to the next in order to give an overreaching, detailed analysis of how a particular saint's legend developed over time. Therefore understanding the chronology of these materials allows this research to plot changing attitudes to the saint, and the changing priorities of authors, as a cult develops Guthlac the holy man into the founder-protector of the monastery at Crowland. Furthermore, comparison allows for an examination of how characteristics of this legend were treated as attitudes changed, evidencing what social relevance this unique dossier has to the role and significance of saints throughout this period. Ultimately, what can the materials of the Guthlac dossier tell us about interest in St Guthlac?

## Chapter II

### THE DATING, ORIGINS AND PROVENANCE OF MATERIALS ASSOCIATED WITH ST GUTHLAC

Catalogues of the visual and textual materials which comprise the Guthlac dossier have been recorded as early as the antiquarian W. de G. Birch's 1881 *Memorials of Saint Guthlac of Crowland* though more complete and comprehensive lists have been compiled by W.F. Bolton in 1954, B. Colgrave in 1956, Jane Roberts in 1970, and most recently, by Alan Thacker in 2002.<sup>90</sup> While these bibliographies effectively acknowledge the extensive size of this dossier, recent disputes over the dating of the vernacular texts in particular, bring to the forefront a need to readdress specific issues of their date, origin and provenance in order to update and assimilate widespread historiography on the dossier. In addition, an attempt will be made here to roughly discern a chronology which will aid in identifying distinct stages or periods in development. This approach will then enable subsequent chapters to relevantly consider the reasoning behind alterations without tedious and lengthy repetitions of each material's orientation within the chronology.

Due to the sheer number of materials created, it will be important to distinguish from these catalogues the importance of some works over others. The short entries found in chronicles, calendars or charters have mostly been disregarded at the outset due to their repetitious and sparse content, though some will be touched upon as necessary in the following chapters.<sup>91</sup> It was further decided to concentrate mainly on exceptional materials produced prior to the thirteenth century in order to highlight the developments that enabled Crowland's transformation into a wealthy and influential abbey by that time.<sup>92</sup> In particular, this thesis is concerned with fourteen materials which can be seen to represent four important stages or developments in the cult. It will subsequently be made clear that these fourteen materials were chosen because of what they can significantly inform us about interest in St Guthlac during different periods. It is hoped that such a discussion will serve to elucidate what an important and varied dossier survives for St Guthlac and why it merits further unified study.

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<sup>90</sup> de Gray Birch, ed., *Memorials*; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 1-33 and Appendix 1, pp. 236-55; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 19-25; Roberts, "Inventory;" Thacker and Sharpe, eds., *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, p. 537.

<sup>91</sup> A thorough listing of these entries can be found in Roberts, "Inventory." No attempt will be made here to discuss every item documented in this article.

<sup>92</sup> Disregarded materials include the Guthlac poems of the *South English Legendary* (B.L. Cotton Junius D ix, Corpus Christi College Cambridge 145, Oxford Bodley 779 [2567]), the rhyming verse found in B.L. Arundel 201 and the Romance *Sir Gowther* (National Library of Scotland MS 19.3.1, B.L. Royal 17.B. XLIII). For studies of the former two texts see Bolton, "Thesis" and Alexandra H. Olsen, *Saint Pega and Saint Guthlac in the South English Legendary* (1996) [www.umilta.net/guthlac.html](http://www.umilta.net/guthlac.html). My knowledge of the *Sir Gowther* text has benefitted from personal correspondence initiated after hearing Raluca Radulescu, "Penitential Romance and Political Martyrs in 15th Century England," at *Considerations of Audience in Medieval and Early Modern Studies* conference held at the University of Kent (2008). Dr. Radulescu is currently working on an interpretation of the neglected *Sir Gowther* text; there is no satisfactory edition to date. Also briefly, Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 204-5, 218-9.

## The Origins

St Guthlac's fame would perhaps not have extended past the lifetime of his familiars, were it not for the existence of a Latin *vita* commissioned by King Ælfwald of East Anglia and written by a monk called Felix probably within fifteen to twenty years of the saint's death. The importance of this text rests in not only its early composition and its numerous manuscript survivals but also in the fact that this work was continually revised and epitomized into the thirteenth century, despite the existence of a variety of more recent, and sometimes famously authored, materials. This does not negate that oral legends may have once existed from which Felix and later materials may have been similarly derived, only that the prevalent version of the Guthlac legend in both vernacular texts and in Crowland sanctioned materials produced after the twelfth century is Felix's. Consequently, there is some basis for all consecutive Guthlacian materials to have been influenced either directly by Felix's *vita* or by the same tradition that Felix used. The dating, origin and provenance of Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* therefore serves as the relevant starting point for any analysis of this cult.

Felix's *vita* must have been composed shortly after the saint's death, for Felix records how he gathered information on the saint from those '*qui diutius cum viro Dei conversati vitam illius ex parte noverant*.'<sup>93</sup> While this figure of speech resounds as hagiographical convention, Wilfrid and Cissa appear in various miracle stories alongside Guthlac, supporting Felix's designation of them as his primary sources for information in the prologue.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, Cissa is apparently still inhabiting Guthlac's cell at the time that Felix is writing.<sup>95</sup> These details importantly reveal that Felix was writing within the lifetime of people who had known the saint personally and that the function of the site had only been modified by the addition of a shrine in the years immediately following Guthlac's death. Moreover, if Guthlac died in 714, a date substantiated by this entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, then Felix must have begun compiling information on him after this time.<sup>96</sup>

An even more precise dating can be inferred from Felix's references to events at Crowland. Felix concludes his *vita* with three important posthumous events: the translation of Guthlac's uncorrupted remains, a vision in which Guthlac announces his intercessory success in obtaining Æthelbald the Mercian throne and evidence of his posthumous efficacy shown by the healing of a blind peasant brought about by Pega administering a relic of her brother's. Colgrave suggests that the tone of this penultimate chapter in particular implies that 'it happened very soon after the saint's death and even before the translation.'<sup>97</sup> However, Felix tells us that Pega was

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<sup>93</sup> 'who for any length of time had dealings with the man of God and knew his life in part'; VG, Prologue, Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>94</sup> VG, Prologue, XXVIII, XXXIX, XL, XLVIII.

<sup>95</sup> VG, XLVIII.

<sup>96</sup> '714. In this year the holy Guthlac died.' Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker, eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: 1961), p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 18-9.



still living at the site at least twelve months following her brother's death.<sup>98</sup> This means that the translation probably took place sometime in 715 though there is no indication that this event signalled Pega's departure from Crowland. Indeed, the integral role that Felix ascribes to Pega in founding her brother's cult would be negated by her immediate departure; ergo the miracle of the blind man could just as likely have occurred after the translation. The vision in which Guthlac appears to Æthelbald can be more confidently dated as he is still referred to as *exul* and promised that he will accede to his throne '*nam priusquam sol bis senis voluminibus annilem circumvolverit orbem*'; a prophesy which was then fulfilled in 716.<sup>99</sup> It can be definitively stated that Felix began compiling his material after these events for he calls Æthelbald king at the time that he is constructing *miris ornamentorum structuris* around the elevated tomb at Crowland.<sup>100</sup>

Nonetheless, frequent allusions to and direct quotes from Bede's prose *Life of St Cuthbert* in particular have led Colgrave to surmise that Felix used it as a source.<sup>101</sup> Bede's prose *life* must have been written just before 721, due to the death in that year of his dedicatee, Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne, and the confirmation in his 725 work, *De temporum ratione*, that the prose *vita* had been written 'some years ago'.<sup>102</sup> This means that Felix could not have been exposed to Bede's *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* until after 721, while the absence of any mention of Guthlac in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* implies that Felix had not finished his work before 731.<sup>103</sup> In addition, Felix explains in his prologue that he is writing for *domino meo* Ælfwald who is *mihi prae ceteris regalium primatum gradibus* in obedience to Ælfwald's commands to draw up a *libellum quem de vita* of Guthlac.<sup>104</sup> Not only does the prologue imply that Felix was writing for his king, it presents a rare and early instance of royal interest in hagiographical literature, found elsewhere only in Bede's dedication of his *Historia* to Ceolwulf.<sup>105</sup> The latest possible date for Felix's *vita* would be 749 when Ælfwald died. Based on these observations, Colgrave and others have concurred that Felix most likely wrote his *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* sometime between 730–740 A.D.<sup>106</sup>

The origins of Felix's work are more difficult to pinpoint. He merely refers to himself humbly as *catholicae congregationis vernaculus* which gives no indication of either his position or location, though the terminology used in the prologue strongly suggests that Ælfwald was Felix's king and that, as Colgrave deduces, 'Felix was either an East Angle or at least living in East Anglia when this was written'.<sup>107</sup> Frequently scholars draw attention to Ælfwald's letter to Boniface, which promises him the prayers of seven East Anglian monasteries, as indicative of the

<sup>98</sup> VG, LI; Ibid, pp. 160-1.

<sup>99</sup> 'for before the sun has passed through its yearly course in twelve revolutions...', VG, LII; Ibid, pp. 164-7.

<sup>100</sup> Felix's tone and choice of language implies that Æthelbald's additions are recent: 'now we see...' VG, LI; Ibid, pp. 162-3.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, pp. 15-9, 174n.

<sup>102</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives*, p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 16-9.

<sup>104</sup> 'to my lord...beloved by me beyond any other of royal rank', VG, prologue; Ibid, pp. 60-1.

<sup>105</sup> HE, Preface; Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 3d reprint ed. (Oxford: 1979), pp. 2-3, 2n.

<sup>106</sup> Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, pp. 15-20; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 19 and Thacker, "Thesis," p. 279.

<sup>107</sup> VG, Prologue; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 16.

many possible sites where Felix could have lived, although this still brings us no closer to his origins.<sup>108</sup> That Felix had scholastic training and was probably a monk is substantiated by the extensive integration of biblical and Christian sources which identify the *Vita Guthlaci* as an exemplary Latin hagiographical writing.<sup>109</sup> However, source analysis and authorial intention are central questions of this thesis, requiring proper attention to be given in later chapters. It is needless to say that Felix's language and style would later prove problematic; for even Orderic Vitalis dismissed the *vita* as '*prolixo et aliquantulum obscuro dictatu*' due to its Aldhelmian imitation and Felix's penchant for unusual words which modern editors still draw attention to.<sup>110</sup>

The manuscript survivals of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* do not aid in identifying its origins either, as the only manuscript that can be dated near to Felix's compositional period is extremely fragmentary and likely to have been produced in the south of England.<sup>111</sup> This has led Colgrave to conclude in his edition of Felix's *vita* that 'none of the MSS. available is outstanding either on account of its age or obvious accuracy of its tradition.'<sup>112</sup> There are nevertheless, thirteen medieval manuscripts containing either partial or entire versions of Felix's *Life* which testify to its popularity and spread and some which contribute invaluable insights for later traditions. Comprehensive notes and a listing have been usefully compiled fairly recently by both Jane Roberts and Bertram Colgrave and their observations will be made use of here since I have not seen any of the manuscripts.<sup>113</sup>

The British Library, MS Royal 4 A xiv contains the oldest surviving fragment of Felix's *Life*, of the prologue and some chapter headings, which ended up as two fly-leaves for a tenth-century commentary on the psalms. The text itself was written in Anglo-Saxon minuscule to which E.A. Loew and others ascribe a late-eighth or early-ninth century date.<sup>114</sup> However, because the *Life* itself has not survived, it has not been included in Colgrave's analysis of the textual relationships between surviving manuscripts. This analysis concluded that the other surviving twelve manuscripts may be organizationally drawn into four groups which stem from up to hypothetically ten preceding exemplars. Nonetheless, there is one manuscript which cannot be definitively fit into these groupings: Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 307. Colgrave

<sup>108</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 209, 4n; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 15-6; D. Whitelock, 'The Pre-Viking Age Church in East Anglia', *Anglo-Saxon England* I (1972), 1-22.

<sup>109</sup> Two exceptional analyses of Felix's skill are Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 279-328 and Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac."

<sup>110</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, Book IV, pp. 322-3; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 17-8; Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 13, 85.

<sup>111</sup> Loew posits that the Guthlac folios are of South-English origin. Ker suggested a Winchester scriptorium, like Hyde or Nunnaminster, before putting forth Worcester. Summarized by Roberts, "Inventory," p. 196; E.A. Loew, *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Paleographical Guide to Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century* (Oxford: 1935), Vol. II, p. 28; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books*, 1946 ed. (London: 1941; reprint, 1964), pp. 207, n.4, 363.

<sup>112</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 52.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-54; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 194-200. Also L. d'Achéry and J. Mabillon, eds., *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, 1st ed., VI vols. (Paris: 1672; reprint, Venice, 1734), Saec. III, Pt. I, pp. 257-75; Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis*, vol. II, pp. 38-50; R. Gough, *The History and Antiquities of Croyland Abbey in the County of Lincoln*, vol. XI, *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica* (London: 1783), pp. 131-53; de Gray Birch, ed., *Memorials*, pp. 1-64.

<sup>114</sup> The bifolium, now numbered fos. 107-8, was cut down from an 11 x 7 inch size and bound in upside down. According to Colgrave, it contains 27-8 lines on each page in double columns and is limited to half of the thirty-sixth chapter heading. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 26; citing Loew, *CLA*, Vol. II, p. 28. H.Gneuss, *A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts* (Temple, Ariz., 2001).

identifies that the complete *vita* has some textual similarities, with groups 1 and 3 in particular, though its differences are substantial enough for him to isolate it as an independent version, derived from a shared past exemplar.<sup>115</sup> Felix's text is written in a ninth-century scribal hand to which has been appended acrostic verses which Colgrave thinks are in the same hand, and Ker thinks are in a different hand.<sup>116</sup> While Roberts concedes that these verses merely imply a 'Crowland interest', Colgrave more directly proposes that this manuscript may have been intended for Guthlac's shrine.<sup>117</sup> There is, however, no other basis for considering this a Crowland manuscript.

In his first group, Colgrave suggests that the fragmentary *vita* sans prologue and chapter headings in Arras MS 1029 (812) is 'so closely connected' to the full text in Boulogne, Public Library MS 637 (106) as to be 'a copy of the other, or...from the same exemplar.'<sup>118</sup> Both of these manuscripts were written in continental hands and, if we are to follow Stubbs, produced around the year 1000.<sup>119</sup> These manuscripts also display associations between St Omer and Bath, leading Grierson to first suggest that exiled St Bertin monks brought their own style to the Bath scriptorium whilst living there.<sup>120</sup> Colgrave postulates that these manuscripts copied an English original; that folios 1-92 and 119-71 of the Boulogne MS were produced at Bath by monks who then took this book home with them while Abbot Seiworld of Bath's gift of this Arras MS to that abbey suggests that the exiled St Bertin monks also created books which were left at Bath.<sup>121</sup>

Colgrave's second grouping comprises British Library MS Harley 3097 and Douai Library MS 852, which he considers a copy of the former because of the agreement between versions.<sup>122</sup> He also sees a number of similarities between this group and the previous Bath-affiliated group which lead him to suggest that these two groups hearken back to a 'not very remote ancestor.' Even more interestingly, only these two second group manuscripts use the term *Mediterraneorum Anglorum* in reference to the Fens, reflecting either a remnant of Felix's lost original or local perceptions of past geography, as both manuscripts have been considered the products of

<sup>115</sup> Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 307 contains only Felix's *vita* in 52 folios; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 46-51.

<sup>116</sup> M.R. James, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, ed. A. Rogers, vol. 11 (Cambridge: 1912), II, p. 105. Also Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>117</sup> Ker omitted a description of this manuscript because its provenance is unknown, infers Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 195-6.

<sup>118</sup> Arras MS 1029 (812), contains VG, X-XXXIV, XL-LIII, fos. 27'-65' of its 154 folios though Colgrave refers to Mabillon's edition which uses a more complete text. Boulogne, Public Library 637 (106), contains a full text including a short appending litany on fos. 85' to 92' of its 171 folios. Colgrave lists the few differences as either 'a slip or an idiosyncrasy on the part of one or other of the scribes'; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>119</sup> Stubbs dates the Arras MS on the appending dedication of the *Life of Dunstan* to archbishop Ælfric, who was archbishop of Canterbury from 995-1005. He does not consider this MS the original, which he thinks was composed around 1000. Consequently, Stubbs' argument concurs with Colgrave's analysis that the Arras MS is slightly older than the Boulogne text. Roberts says Arras is late-tenth, though she is apparently using Colgrave's notes as she has not seen the continental MSS. Ibid, pp. 34-9 citing W. Stubbs, ed., *Memorials of Saint Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: 1874), pp. xi, xxvii.

<sup>120</sup> P. Grierson, "Les Livres De L'abbé Seiworld De Bath," *Revue Bénédictine* 52 (1940), p. 104 cited by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 34-9.

<sup>121</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 39, 46.

<sup>122</sup> B.L. Harleian MS 3097, 128 folios of which Felix's *vita* is on fos. 67b-84b containing prologue, no chapter list and the *vita* ends on the middle of the last page without finishing chapter LIII. Douai Public Library 852, 207 folios with Felix's *vita* on fos. 3a-32a; Ibid, pp. 47-9.

fenland monasteries.<sup>123</sup> Harley 3097, as the older of the two according to Ker, Roberts and Colgrave, has long been identified as a product of the Benedictine abbey at Peterborough.<sup>124</sup> The Douai version of Felix's *Life* which then stemmed from this Harleian MS has the notable distinction of being the only surviving manuscript containing this *vita* to have been definitively produced in Crowland's scriptorium. Thus its contents are of great import to any study of the development of the cult.

Douai 852 begins with a brief account of the translation of St Neot in a thirteenth century hand and is followed by Felix's *vita* in a twelfth century hand which Colgrave says has been marked throughout for lections, especially chapters XLVI-II, used during Guthlac's octave.<sup>125</sup> Appended to this is a section by Orderic Vitalis describing the abbey's foundation by Æthelbald and, in a different twelfth-century hand, invaluable the only surviving *Translatio* and *Miracula* of St Guthlac composed around twenty years after the 1136 translation.<sup>126</sup> The last Guthlacian text to be included in the compilation was Orderic Vitalis' *Abbrevatio* of Felix's *Life* which was requested by Prior Wulfwin before 1124, copied here in a thirteenth century hand. The remainder of this manuscript's contents are items of interest for the Crowland traditions and history they relate. These items are, in order, a history of thirty-six abbots of Crowland, a series of eight pieces, mostly attributed to William of Ramsey, concerning the burial of Earl Waltheof at the abbey after 1076 and his translation in 1219 (an epitaph and *Life* by William of Ramsey, a *Gesta antecessorum comitis Waldevi*, *De comitissa* regarding Waltheof's widow and their descendants, another *Life* drawn from William of Malmesbury, Orderic and Florence of Worcester and a *Miracula* containing miracles occurring between 1093-1137), and a *Life* of St Neot whose relics were translated to Crowland in 1213.<sup>127</sup> This manuscript then contains a few pieces unrelated to Crowland in a twelfth-century hand before concluding with three pieces on the origins, life and translation of St Ivo, whose relics were brought to nearby Ramsey in 1001, in a thirteenth-century hand.<sup>128</sup> Like the Douai MS 852, Harley 3097 also contains items of particular local interest in addition to Felix's *Life*: Folcard's *Life of St Botolph*, the *Lives* of Tancred, Torhtred and Tova, and a translation of the saints who rest at Thorney form a large block though the remaining contents

<sup>123</sup> VG, XXIV; Ibid, pp. 47-8.

<sup>124</sup> Roberts concurs with Ker's dating of MS Harley 3097 to the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> c.; Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 151; Roberts, "Inventory," p. 197 contra Colgrave's suggestion of a mid-11<sup>th</sup> c. date. Its attribution to Peterborough is due to its appearance in a late 14<sup>th</sup> c. catalogue of Peterborough books and the observation that this MS has chain marks., Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>125</sup> A more detailed list with dating discussed by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 39-42.

<sup>126</sup> This *Miracula* is now incomplete. Roberts suggests that a folio must have been lost at some point after Peter of Blois summarized these miracles in his epitome, for she identifies that the Bollandist edition of this text breaks off at exactly the same point. Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 199-201. Colgrave thinks that Mabillon's edition of Felix's *vita* from a Lyre MS was actually a now-lost transcription of the Douai MS 852; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 45.

<sup>127</sup> In detail, Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 40-1. Also Henry of Huntingdon, *The History of the English People, 1000-1154*, trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: 2002), II.34, p. 29 records Waltheof's death and translation to Crowland as occurring in King William's ninth year (1075).

<sup>128</sup> The unrelated texts are Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*, the *Planctus Angliae de morte Lanfranci*, *De singularitate clericorum* and Isidore's *De Fide Catholica* as recorded by Colgrave, Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 41.

have no other obvious relationship to either these local hagiographies or each other.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, this second group of manuscripts remains our only testimony to the survival of Felix's *vita* in monasteries near to Crowland. The Douai MS 852 is especially important for the textual record it provides of Crowland's great revival period, corresponding as it did with a renewed interest in Guthlac and the acquisitions of St Neot and St Waltheof, during the abbacy of Henry Longchamp (c.1191-1237).

Colgrave's third group stems from the version of Felix's *Life*, without prologue or chapter headings, in British Library MS Royal 13 A xv.<sup>130</sup> He describes this manuscript as unusually written on folios which alternate between two scribal hands, one insular, the other Caroline, of the tenth century though it was a third, eleventh-century hand, which delineated the version from which both the Trinity College Dublin MS B.i.16 and Gotha, Herzogliche Bibliothek I.81 were eventually made.<sup>131</sup> Unfortunately, the provenance of Royal 13 A xv and the Gotha manuscripts are unknown and in the case of the latter, likely to remain so due to its disappearance. Yet Colgrave had seen this text, indeed he collated it for his edition, and so we are reliant upon his description of it as a collection of English, Welsh and Cornish saints' *lives* written in an early fourteenth-century hand.<sup>132</sup> The Trinity MS B.i.16, on the other hand, contains the March to June section of a thirteenth-century legendary both written and kept at Jervaulx.<sup>133</sup> This is the most northern manuscript survival of the *Life* though there was once another, which survives only as a record in a thirteenth-century catalogue of Rievaulx abbey.<sup>134</sup>

The final, fourth group, organized by Colgrave contains four manuscripts which were all written in the South West of England and begin with '*In nomine trino et divino. Incipit liber de vita sancti Guthlaci strenuissimi ac perfectissimi anachoritae*' instead of prologue and chapter headings.<sup>135</sup> The most interesting manuscript of this group is Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 389, a text showing octave markings, written in what Ker and Colgrave consider Insular miniscule of the late-tenth century.<sup>136</sup> It contains a full page, colour illustration of Jerome seated

<sup>129</sup> This manuscript contains, in order, an exposition on the prophet Daniel by Jerome, Othloh's *Life of St Nicholas*, the local material then four sermons by Ambrose, the prologue to the *Life of St Nicholas* and selections from the *Life* and miracles of the same saint. Recorded in *Ibid*, p. 30.

<sup>130</sup> B.L. MS Royal 13 A xv contains only the Felix's *vita* on 45 folios. *Ibid*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 49-50.; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 196-7.

<sup>132</sup> Gotha, Herzogliche Bibliothek I.81 contains Felix's *vita* without prologue or chapter list on fos. 104b-113a of its 230 folios. Described by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 43-4 and Roberts, "Inventory," p. 200.

<sup>133</sup> Trinity College MS B.i.16 similarly has no prologue or chapter headings. Felix's *vita* occupies pp. 138-64 of 252 pages. Roberts, "Inventory," p. 198 and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 43.

<sup>134</sup> Colgrave lists the record as reading: 124 *Vitae patrum. Vita S. Guthlaci, liber qui dicitur formula vite honeste in 1<sup>o</sup> volumine*. Identified by James, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, I, p. 49 but cited by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 45.

<sup>135</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>136</sup> Corpus Christi College 389 has Felix's *vita* on fos. 18<sup>r</sup>-66<sup>r</sup> of its 66 folios. James suggests that this is a 9<sup>th</sup> c. document, Ker assigns its date to the late-10<sup>th</sup> c. and Colgrave considers it from 'probably the second half' of the 10<sup>th</sup> c. M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge: 1909-12), Vol. II, p. 239, Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 25, Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 27-8. Roberts also draws attention to the five Old English glosses in the Guthlac folios which both she and Ker concur are 'hardly later than the tenth century', Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 195-6.

at his desk followed by his *Vita Sancti Pauli*, dated by Wormald to c. 1070.<sup>137</sup> The successive *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* is similarly prefaced by an unfinished, full page illustration, this time displaying a seated king who points his finger at the tonsured youth standing beside him. Colgrave's inference that this drawing may represent King Ælfwald commissioning Felix to write his work appears to be justified by the illustration of author, not subject, before the *Life of St Paul*.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, a depiction of Ælfwald alongside the author serves to emphasize the role royalty had in the creation of this text. Nor was this manuscript the product of a local monastery; its characteristic library marks and inclusion in a fourteenth century booklist show that it belonged to St Augustine's, Canterbury.<sup>139</sup> The other manuscript in this group which is also considered to be of Canterbury provenance is British Library, Cotton Nero C vii. Here Felix's *Life* is written in a twelfth-century hand in a section of 50 folios that Ker identifies once formed part of a collection belonging to Christ Church Canterbury.<sup>140</sup> The other two manuscripts, Trinity College MS B.4.3 and British Library Cotton Nero E i, are considered mid to late eleventh-century copies made at Salisbury and Worcester from a common source.<sup>141</sup> The inclusion of Felix's *vita* in the Worcester and Canterbury collection and the Trinity hagiographical collection nevertheless give some indication that this saint was of interest to some of the southern Benedictine reformed abbeys. Moreover, post-Norman library catalogues from Ramsey, Tichfield, and Glastonbury confirm that they too once possessed copies of a *vita* of St Guthlac.<sup>142</sup> Presumably, most of these lists referred to Felix's *vita*, as so many of the surviving manuscripts contain this version rather than newer Latin revisions made by Orderic Vitalis or Peter of Blois in the mid-twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

The manuscript evidence for Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* indicates that this text enjoyed a wide circulation both in Crowland's vicinity, as evidenced through Colgrave's second grouping, and more generally in the south, where this cult flourished over the next few centuries. Indeed, the circulation of Felix's *vita* throughout these regions might be seen to correspond with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia that figured so prominently in its origins. Felix

<sup>137</sup>F. Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: 1952), p. 61 cited by Roberts, "Inventory," p. 195.

<sup>138</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 28.

<sup>139</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 195-6.

<sup>140</sup> B.L., Cotton Nero C vii contains Felix's *vita* on fos. 29<sup>v</sup>-40<sup>v</sup> of its 225 folios (fos. 29-79 were originally part of the Canterbury passionals). Ker also identified other sections of this passionals are to be found in MS Harley 315, fos. 1-39 and MS Harley 624, fos. 84-143; Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 22 cited by Roberts, "Inventory," p. 198.

<sup>141</sup> Trinity College Dublin MS B.4.3 with Felix's *vita* on fos. 73a-85b of 124 folios. B.L. Cotton Nero E i (part 1) contains Felix's *vita* on fos. 185a – 196a of 208 folios though it does not appear in the index, nor is it numbered, leading Colgrave to infer that it may have been 'added as an afterthought.' Both Colgrave and Ker ascribe the Trinity MS to Salisbury; Roberts remains uncertain. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 31-2, 42-3; Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 3; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 198-9.

<sup>142</sup> Listed by Colgrave under 'Lost Manuscripts': a Glastonbury catalogue of 1248 lists 3 separate MSS. containing Latin *vitae*, a Ramsey catalogue of the thirteenth century lists a *vita* while a fourteenth century index of B.L. Lansdowne MS 436 lists that it once contained a *vita* which, along with 3 other *lives*, is now missing from the end. Tichfield catalogue from c.1400 records its possession of a Latin *vita*. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 44-5. Leland saw a *Life of St Guthlac* at Glastonbury which he attributed to Bede; cited in James P. Carley, ed., *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's 'Cronica Sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie'* (Woodbridge: 1985), p. 275, n.31. I am grateful to Dr. Catherine Clarke for providing this reference.

wrote his *vita* for a king and this proved to be one of its most famous aspects, for the inventors of Crowland's foundation legend as for the illustrator of Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 389. That this is the earliest definitive account of Guthlac's life and the foundation of his cult is clear from its early compositional date if not from the fact that there was no community at Crowland to which Felix might have belonged. Consequently we expect and find that Felix's *Vita Guthlaci* became the source for so many later writings on the saint and was itself used liturgically, as the acrostics and octave markings in some manuscripts indicate. The most striking testimony to its longevity as the definitive account however, was its inclusion in Crowland's collection of materials relating to the history of their house and its saints; Douai 852 manuscript, despite Felix's inherent contradictions of their claims to a monastery on site in Guthlac's lifetime.

### **The Vernacular Variations**

One of the most unique aspects of this dossier is that it contains a number of materials written in the vernacular. No other Anglo-Saxon saint cult boasts such variety; there are entries on Guthlac and his sister in the Old English *Martyrology* and two separate, anonymous poems contained in the Exeter book which develop the episodes of Guthlac's battle for his hermitage and the heroic manner of his death. There is also an anonymous Old English translation of Felix's *vita* which in turn, provided the material for homily XXIII of the Vercelli MS Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII.<sup>143</sup> Yet these works tend to get overlooked by historians as contributing anything to our understanding of this cult's development, in favour of the dates and detailed timeline provided by Felix.<sup>144</sup> Many of these texts in fact betray earlier compositional dates than their surviving manuscripts though most appear to have been dependent upon Felix, or upon the same traditions used by him, for their material. Nonetheless, they still inform us about the appeal of St Guthlac and needs of his audience because no other Anglo-Saxon cult boasts such a range of vernacular materials. It will therefore be important to update the historiography concerning the dating and origins of these compositions here at the outset in order to place them within this cult's timeline. Jane Roberts pioneered a holistic approach to the Latin and vernacular materials in articles such as 'Hagiography and Literature: the case of St Guthlac of Crowland', however her research was not concerned with its significance to the society that produced it.<sup>145</sup> That was not her purpose though it clearly laid the foundations for further analysis and appreciation of its contributions. Furthermore, reconsideration of the Old English texts as the next chronological grouping exposes

<sup>143</sup> D.G. Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, *Early English Text Society* (Oxford: 1992), pp. 381-2; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 202-3.

<sup>144</sup> The Exeter book poems in particular appear to only get appraised through their relation to Felix and the fame his work presumably achieved; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 20; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 281-2 and Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 143-6.

<sup>145</sup> Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature" and Roberts, "Seals of the Cross."

the range of materials which may have once existed and the many purposes to which they were shaped.

Perhaps the earliest of all the vernacular materials is the poem now referred to as *Guthlac A* contained in the Exeter book. There was a long period when the anonymous poems *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B* were considered one work with the opening material at the beginning of *Guthlac A* to have introduced the themes for both texts.<sup>146</sup> This has now come to be disregarded as they are now recognized as structurally and thematically contained works of independent authorship. However, it was only after Jane Roberts' metrical analysis concluded that 'they are by poets different both in identity and period' that the numerous arguments for their unity appear to have ceased.<sup>147</sup> Her examination clearly outlined that *Guthlac A* contained a number of linguistic and metrical features that are not found in *Guthlac B*, though present in other Old English poems like *Genesis A*, *Beowulf*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel* that are generally considered 'early' compositions within the surviving corpus of Old English literature.<sup>148</sup> In particular, she catalogued the *A* poet's unusual legal and religious vocabulary as an anomalous usage not found in any other Old English poem.<sup>149</sup> These distinctions then led Roberts to first suggest that *Guthlac A* was an early work which may have been composed early in the eighth century, though she sensibly countered later that it is equally likely that these differences may simply 'reflect nothing more than the use of different conventions by men working in the same period.'<sup>150</sup> A substantially later dating has been put forth most recently by Jones and Conner who argue on the basis of suitable content that *Guthlac A* was composed during the Benedictine Revival.<sup>151</sup> While their theories contribute to our understanding of the continuing relevance of the Guthlac legend for reformed houses, they fail to reconcile Roberts' technical and comparative dating observations to their arguments of contextual suitability. Indeed, recent articles by Orchard, Fulk and Lapidge have shown how technical analyses have posited earlier archetypes to various surviving poetical works and shown the high incidence of Cynewulfian influence amongst the surviving codices; points which serve to warn against arguing solely upon the basis of a manuscript's datable context.<sup>152</sup>

It may be generally agreed that *Guthlac A* is an earlier work within the corpus of Old English poetry yet it is not agreed where this poem fits within the chronology of writings on St

<sup>146</sup> Laurence K. Shook, "The Prologue of the Old-English *Guthlac A*," *Mediaeval Studies* 23 (1961), especially p. 294.

<sup>147</sup> Jane Roberts, "A Metrical Examination of the Poems *Guthlac A* & *B*," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 71, no. 4 (1971), p. 119.

<sup>148</sup> These features include un-contracted verbs, syncopation, verb stresses and placement in the line, alliteration of finite verbs, line stress, and rhyme and are recorded in great detail in *Ibid*, Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 19-71, 91-37. Also

<sup>149</sup> Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 50-3. Also more recently, Philip R. McKinney, "Mec Dryhtnes Hand/ Mundað Mid Mægne: The King's Protection in *Guthlac A*," *Old English Newsletter* 17, no. 2 (1984).

<sup>150</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 201-2; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 70.

<sup>151</sup> Patrick W. Conner, "Source Studies, the Old English *Guthlac A* and the English Benedictine Reformation," *Revue Bénédictine* 103 (1993); Christopher A. Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," *Medieval Studies* 57 (1995).

<sup>152</sup> Michael Lapidge, "The archetype of *Beowulf*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 29 (2000); Andy Orchard, "Computing Cynewulf: The *Judith*-Connection," in J. Mann and M. Nolan eds., *The Text in the Community* (Notre Dame: 2006); R.D. Fulk, "Old English Metre and Oral Tradition: Three Issues Bearing on Poetic Chronology," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 106.3 (July 2007).



Guthlac. Deciding its placement requires that it be proven whether or not the *A* poet knew and used Felix's *vita* as a source and this issue remains unresolved to date. *Guthlac A* only focuses on one stage of Guthlac's life, the temptations and trials he endures at his wilderness hermitage, so it does not follow a similar narrative progression as Felix's *Life*. Moreover, the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* only identifies three short phrases within the 818 line poem<sup>153</sup> which *could* have derived from Felix.<sup>154</sup> Gerould, Shook and more recently, Stevick and Cornell, contributed detailed analyses which proposed that all the themes, narrative progression, and climactic episode of the descent to Hell could have come from chapters 16-33 of Felix's *Life* 'as elaboration, generalization, epitome, or direct translation of its materials.'<sup>155</sup> However many still concur with Roberts an unwillingness to categorize Felix as the source for *Guthlac A*. Many feel that comparison to Felix devalues the originality of this poem and overlooks anomalous episodes or thematic and linguistic parallels to texts other than the *Vita Guthlaci*.<sup>156</sup> It is also possible that if the *A* poet was writing analogously to Felix, that they made independent use of stories already in circulation. Oral tales certainly supplied Felix with material.<sup>157</sup> Indeed, Robin Norris drew attention to the quantity of oral material which must have once existed by citing Felix's prologue justification that the excluded material was substantial enough to warrant *sequentis libelli*.<sup>158</sup> Similarly does she draw attention, as does Kurtz, to the *A* poet's assertion that Guthlac's story was orally transmitted as starkly contrasting with the *B* poet's reference to using books on the saint.<sup>159</sup> These references indicate that stories were circulating in the eighth century from which both the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* and *Guthlac A* may have been created, though this is not sufficient to substantiate or disprove the *A* poem's relationship to Felix. Because *Guthlac A* appears

<sup>153</sup> The only significant passage to now be missing from *GA* occurs at l.368 where approximately 70 lines of verse have been lost due to the cutting out of a folio, Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 33. Stevick suggests that this poem is missing 2 sections of lacunae, consisting of 891 lines, as based upon right angle geometrical features and the numbers of metrical lines; Robert D. Stevick, "The Length of *Guthlac A*," *Viator: Medieval Studies* 13 (1982), p. 32.

<sup>154</sup> These phrases are 'mid gæsticum wæpnum' (ll. 177b-178a), 'ne sy him banes bryce...gedon motan' (ll. 698a-700b), 'wæron hyra gongas...smebe ond gesefte' (ll. 731a-732b). The first phrase also has listed as its source Ephesians while the second quote lists the Hebrew Psalms and the homilies on the *Body and Soul* and *Bazire and Cross* as equally likely. Only the last phrase does not share its source with any other text than Felix. Catherine A.M. Clarke, *Records for Anglo-Saxon Text Guthlac A (C.A.3.2.1)* (Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project, English Faculty, University of Oxford, 1999 [cited 30/4 2009]).

<sup>155</sup> Cynthia Cornell, "Sources of the Old English Guthlac Poems" submitted for Ph.D., Dept. of English, University of Missouri-Columbia (1976), p. 25.

<sup>156</sup> Daniel Gillmore Calder, "Guthlac A & B: Some Discriminations," in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation of John C. McGalliard*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson and Doloris Warwick Frese (Indiana: 1975), Conner, "Source Studies, the Old English *Guthlac A* and the English Benedictine Reformation;" Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*;" Toby C. Langen, "A Commentary on the Two Old English Poems of St Guthlac" submitted for Ph.D., Dept. of English, University of Washington (1973); Jane Roberts, "Guthlac A: Sources and Source Hunting," in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Woodbridge: 1988), Manish Sharma, "A Reconstruction of the Structure of *Guthlac A*," *Journal of English and German Philology* 101, no. 2 (2002); Shook, "Prologue of *GA*."

<sup>157</sup> For example *VG*, prologue and XLVIII. Wieland imagines Felix's Latin *vita* as a 'transitory state' between the oral tales of witnesses which made up his sources and its reconversion into an oral medium to reach its intended audience that marked the early stages of literacy in Anglo-Saxon England. Gernot R. Wieland, "Aures Lectoris: Orality and Literacy in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 7 (1997).

<sup>158</sup> *VG*, prologue; Robin Norris, "The Augustinian Theory of Use and Enjoyment in *Guthlac A* and *B*," *Neuphilologische* 104, no. 2 (2003), pp. 159-60.

<sup>159</sup> *GA*, ll. 536b-38a versus *GB*, ll. 878b-83b; cited by *Ibid*, pp. 159-60. Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 143-4. The phrase 'we gehyrdon' appears in *Beowulf*, *Guthlac A*, and the poems of Cynewulf and has been argued to denote oral transmission to the poet. On the use of this phrase in Cynewulfian poems see Earl R. Anderson, *Cynewulf: Structure, Style and Theme in His Poetry* (New Jersey: 1983), p. 19.

unconcerned with promoting the cult site or its fixtures, I consider its purpose different to Felix's *Life* and have grouped it with the other vernacular texts. With these at least, *Guthlac A* shares not only a manuscript survival, style and language but perhaps also a purpose.

The poem *Guthlac B*, on the other hand, is clearly indebted to Felix's *Life* for not only material but its structure; an indebtedness which is acknowledged when the *B* poet says that '*Us secgað bec*' about the manner of Guthlac's life and death.<sup>160</sup> It develops Felix's chapter L into a 560 line<sup>161</sup> dialogue between the dying Guthlac and his unnamed attendant.<sup>162</sup> The source of *Guthlac B* thus makes it possible to suggest that it was composed towards the end of the eighth or into the early-ninth century, though certainly after Felix's *vita*. It is also possible to consider it the next surviving text produced on this subject. Furthermore, Roberts' analysis of the technical features of the *B* poem confirms that it used word forms, compounds and contractions that are more prevalent within later works, particularly those considered part of the Cynewulfian canon.<sup>163</sup> Similarities to these works may further corroborate a dating range for *Guthlac B* that was contemporaneous with the late eighth-early ninth or mid-tenth century dating ranges postulated for Cynewulf.<sup>164</sup>

There are four poems which have been definitively attributed to the poet Cynewulf: *The Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene* in the Vercelli Book, and *Christ II* and *Juliana* in the Exeter Book. These four poems use an earlier Anglian dialect despite their later manuscript date and have all been attributed to a certain 'Cynewulf' because this name is spelled out in runes at the end of each poem along with a request for his audience's prayers.<sup>165</sup> The use of runes for this signature implies that these poems were meant to be read, as the runes are not conspicuous orally, except perhaps in the case of *Juliana*. *Guthlac B* has been considered 'Cynewulfian' because it too freely adapts its Latin source to Old English literary conventions. For instance, the *B* poet has added an elegiac tone and mood through developing the role of the witness-attendant alongside a characterization of Death which reveals a more dynamic struggle at Guthlac's bedside. However, it is impossible to determine Cynewulfian authorship, because the ending of *Guthlac B* has been lost and it can never be proven that it contained a runic signature. This attribution has lost further ground as Roberts' calculated that only four lines of script (six lines of verse) would have fit into the cropped sections; not enough for this signature, let alone a lost opening to the

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<sup>160</sup> l. 878b: 'Books tell us...'; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 36-43, 112; S.A.J. Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, (London: 1982), p. 270. Compare this with the use of '*we gehyrdon*' treated by Anderson, *Cynewulf*, p. 19.

<sup>161</sup> *Guthlac B* is incomplete as the top of folio 53<sup>r</sup> is missing, as is a gathering or more between folios 52-3; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 43.

<sup>162</sup> The *B* poet also alludes or summarizes VG, XXXIV, XXXVI, XXXIX and XLV.

<sup>163</sup> Roberts, "Metrical Examination," pp. 95-119. Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 70-1. Claes Schaar, *Critical Studies in the Cynewulf Group* (Lund: 1949), p. 9.

<sup>164</sup> Anderson assigns a range from c. 750/800 to 950s; Schaar leans towards the late 8<sup>th</sup>/early 9<sup>th</sup>; Schaar, *Cynewulf Group*, p. 9.

<sup>165</sup> Cynewulf's dialect is argued to be Anglian on the basis of two series of leonine rhymes found in *Elene* and in *Christ II*; these rhymes could not be rendered in the West Saxon dialect by the scribes of the Vercelli and Exeter book and so they survive imperfectly. Also, the name Cynewulf with an 'e' does not appear in Northumbrian documents earlier than the 9<sup>th</sup> century and so an earlier 'e' form of the name strongly suggests that Cynewulf was Mercian. These rhymes and the name are discussed by Anderson, *Cynewulf*, pp. 16-7.

consecutive poem *Azarias*.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, these stylistic similarities have lead Gerould, and more recently A.H. Olsen, to postulate that the *B* poet was probably writing at about the same time as Cynewulf and was influenced by his style and subject development; theories which appear to have been supported by congruence of phrases found through textual comparison.<sup>167</sup>

There is nothing within these two poems to suggest a place of origin. The *A* poet was either ignorant or chose to ignore certain details when crafting this poem for it mentions none of the persons or affiliations that are recorded by Felix. His setting is allegorically envisioned to complement Guthlac's trials, suggesting that artistic intention and not a lack of information were behind his inaccurate depiction of the Fens.<sup>168</sup> That the *B* poet similarly disregarded known details in favour of poetic licence explains why neither Becel nor Pega are named in *Guthlac B*, though their names were known from his source.<sup>169</sup> Neither can Roberts' conclude any possible origins from her technical analyses of these poems, for it is widely accepted that the Exeter book is one of the most uniform of the Old English manuscripts.<sup>170</sup> She nevertheless notes that though both *Guthlac A* and *B* are written in late West Saxon dialect, like the rest of the Exeter book, they still contain some Anglian and Kentish forms which 'may result from successive stages of copying or [equally from] the normal presence of such forms in WS. poetic manuscripts.'<sup>171</sup> Despite the lack of conclusive evidence, eastern sites like Crowland and contrasting West Mercian sites like Glastonbury, Hereford or Worcester have been put forth as possible centres for their creation.<sup>172</sup>

Both *Guthlac A* and *B* survive consecutively in a single copy within the Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501.<sup>173</sup> More can be determined regarding the provenance of this manuscript than the individual poems that it contains. The *Codex Exoniensis* or Exeter book is one of the largest surviving codices of vernacular verse in existence, and possibly the earliest with a dating from c.965-75, and a record that it was a gift of Bishop Leofric who re-established his see at Exeter

<sup>166</sup> Jane Roberts, "Guthlac A, B and C?" *Medium Ævum* 421 (1973), pp. 44-5. Also Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 43-4.

<sup>167</sup> Both Gerould and more recently, Olsen, argue that the *B* poet was Cynewulf's peer; Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, *Guthlac of Croyland: A Study of Heroic Hagiography* (Washington: 1981), p. 69; G.H. Gerould, "The Old English Poems on St Guthlac and Their Latin Source," *Modern Language Notes* 32 (1917), p. 89. Orchard's article establishes a strong case for textual comparison and the influence of Cynewulfian style amongst *Judith* and *Elene* and amongst the surviving poetical codices, identifying the possibility for more insight; Andy Orchard, "Computing Cynewulf: the *Judith*-Connection," in J.Mann and M. Nolan eds., *The Text in the Community* (Notre Dame: 2006).

<sup>168</sup> This theory will be explored at length in the next chapter, contra Laurence K. Shook, "The Burial Mound in *Guthlac A*," *Modern Philology* 58, no. 1 (1960).

<sup>169</sup> Biggs interprets their namelessness to represent 'concepts rather than people', denoting personifications of the body, hoping for reunification with the soul at the Last Judgment (symbolized by Guthlac's sister); Frederick M. Biggs, "Unities in the Old English *Guthlac B*" *Journal of English and German Philology* 89, no. 2 (1990), pp. 155, 161. Olsen suggests that conceiving the attendant as an Everyman figure may have aided in representing the Orosian pattern of the Fall, Redemption, like the *Elene* ending; Olsen, *Heroic Hagiography*, p. 92.

<sup>170</sup> A good general summary can be found in the most recent edition of this manuscript; Bernard J. Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, 2 vols., vol. 1: Texts (Exeter: 2000), pp. 25-7, 29-33.

<sup>171</sup> Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 63-71.

<sup>172</sup> Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: 1953), p. 134. Also, Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 71.

<sup>173</sup> The Exeter Anthology of Old English poetry comprises folios 8-130 of the present day MS., fos. 1-8 comprise Leofric's donation list, notice of other gifts and legal documents which used to belong to Gospel book Cambridge University Library MS. li.2.11 but were removed and bound here when the former MS was given to Archbishop Parker in 1566. Muir, ed., *Exeter Anthology*.

only in 1050.<sup>174</sup> There has been no dispute that ‘*an mycel Englisc boc be gehwilcum þingum on leoð wisan geworht*’ recorded in Leofric’s list of books given to Exeter is the present day Exeter book and that, although seriously damaged and missing leaves, folios 8-130 remain exactly as they would have appeared for an Anglo-Saxon audience.<sup>175</sup> The manuscript itself was written throughout by a single, neat hand which has also been identified as having written five other surviving manuscripts, three of which bear hallmarks of Canterbury production.<sup>176</sup> Robin Flower published in the 1932 Exeter book facsimile his findings that ultraviolet light examination of the last leaf revealed that one Æthelweard had been overwritten by the name Leofric in a dedication which also signalled that the original donor gave this book to a house dedicated to the Virgin in 1018. Flower has further suggested that this house could have been Crediton, as Leofric could then plausibly have acquired the book there before moving to Exeter though this progression has not been accepted without dispute.<sup>177</sup> Leofric’s booklist detailing ‘*ðas gyfu 7 þisne unnan*’ has been variously interpreted to mark the collection which Leofric himself assembled or to show the extent of an existing manuscript tradition to which he contributed after the move of his see.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, the angle cast by Joyce Hill on Leofric’s donations contributes to this debate by revealing how Leofric’s background and ideology can be seen to have influenced the books he acquired.<sup>179</sup>

It is therefore understandable why Conner and Jones suggested a Benedictine context for the Guthlac poems when the name Æthelweard found underneath Leofric’s in the Exeter anthology dedication may provide a link to a family enthusiastically involved with the Revival. Ealdorman Æthelweard and his sons founded and endowed Pershore, Cernel and Eynsham and commissioned Ælfric to compose vernacular homilies, hagiographies and a Bible translation, showing that this ealdorman’s family had an interest in vernacular texts for reading. Flower has even suggested that the Exeter book itself may have been collected for an ealdorman like Æthelweard, as it can be ‘no accident that Æthelweard’s kinsman Bryhtnoth is lamented in the last great poem of Anglo-Saxon England’, *The Battle of Maldon*.<sup>180</sup> However, more recent

<sup>174</sup> The most up-to-date summary of dating has been summarized by Muir, *Ibid*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>175</sup> ‘a large English book about various matters treated in verse’; translation from Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, R.W. Chambers, Max Förster, and Robin Flower, eds., *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry* (London: 1932), p. 10. Also M. Lapidge, “Surviving booklists from Anglo-Saxon England” in M.Lapidge and H. Gneuss, *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday* (Cambridge: 1985), pp. 64-9.

<sup>176</sup> London, Lambeth Palace Library 149, fos. 1-139; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 319 & Bodley 718; Exeter Cathedral Library 3507; Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 943 cited in Richard Gameson, “The Origin of the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry,” *Anglo-Saxon England* (1996), pp. 162-3.

<sup>177</sup> Chambers, Förster, and Flower, eds., *The Exeter Book*, especially, pp. 87-90. Folio 138b.

<sup>178</sup> P. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: a tenth-century cultural history* (Woodbridge: 1993); R. Gameson, “The Origin of the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry.” Also Jenny Stratford and Teresa Webber, “Bishops and kings: private book collections in medieval England” in E. Leedham-Green and T. Webber, *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, I (Cambridge: 2006).

<sup>179</sup> ‘these gifts and this grant’ trans. by Hill. Hill suggests that the book list was ‘conducive to reform in a general way....but what he collected was a working library for an Episcopal see with a *familia* of regular canons;” Leofric of Exeter and the Practical Politics of Book Collecting” in S. Kelly and J.J. Thompson, *Imagining the Book* (Turnhout: 2005), pp. 84-88.

<sup>180</sup> *The Battle of Maldon* remains only in a transcript of 1724 following the fire at Ashburnham House, Westminster (London, British Library, Cotton Otho A xii [burnt]). The entry for 991 of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records the death of Bryhtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, as does the Latin *Life of St Oswald* (written a decade after the battle) and the Book of Ely (compiled c.1176 from an earlier work). Chambers, Förster, and Flower, eds., *The Exeter Book*, pp. 87-8, 90.

scholarship has shown that the Exeter Book was likely created after Æthelweard's death, though it is possible that the dedication may refer to his son Æthelmær's son-in-law of the same name.<sup>181</sup>

The ordering of its contents suggest that this codex was a copy of an already existing anthology, although the scribe of this collection may have imposed his own West Saxon word forms on what may have originally been poems either wholly or partly in Anglian dialect.<sup>182</sup> Indeed, the separation of signed poems like Cynewulf's *Christ II* and *Juliana* shows that authorship was not a determining factor in compiling the anthology. Wherever the original anthology was made, it was done in a purposeful manner which generally provides 'the essentials of Christian faith and Christian living.'<sup>183</sup> In adhering to this overall theme, the longest poems come first in the anthology, beginning with the different roles of Christ (in poems labelled *Christ I*, Cynewulf's *Christ II* and *Christ III*). These are followed by poems dealing with events in religious history and saints' lives, showing a continuation of holy living after Christ; the two Guthlac poems, *Azarias*, *Pheonix*, and Cynewulf's *Juliana*. The remainder of the codex is filled with shorter poems which have been classified as elegies, secular poems, gnomic poems and riddles. The arrangement of the *Guthlac* poems within this codex is integral to the study of this cult for it presents the historian with an anthologist's view of how the Guthlac legend suited this collection and ultimately, its intended audience.

The two Guthlacian entries in the Old English *Martyrology*, unlike *Guthlac A & B*, were clearly designed to condense details known from Felix's *vita*. This *Martyrology* is exceptional in that it includes a short narrative passage besides the obligatory date and place of death.<sup>184</sup> The first Guthlacian entry concerns Guthlac's sister, the holy virgin Pega, whose life is commemorated on her feast day of January 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>185</sup> Her entry records not only her relationship to Guthlac but the miracle which occurred when she administered salt blessed by her late brother to a blind man's eyes, causing him to regain his sight.<sup>186</sup> The source of this entry is most likely chapter LIII of Felix's *vita* for this event survives in no other source.<sup>187</sup> The only aspect of this entry which could

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<sup>181</sup> This Æthelweard gave Lambeth MS 149 (c. 1015) to a St Mary's in 1018; M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600-899* (London: 1996), pp. 146-7.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, p.66.

<sup>183</sup> Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 201.

<sup>184</sup> Günter Kotzor, ed., *Das Altenglische Martyrologium* II vols., vol. I (München: 1981), pp. 175-9; Günter Kotzor, "The Latin Tradition of Martyrologies and the OE Martyrology," in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. P. Szarmach (Albany: 1986).

<sup>185</sup> Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, January 9, no. 15, p. 13. Crowland calendars from the mid-eleventh and fifteenth centuries, as well as Orderic and the pseudo-Ingulph record Pega's death as the 8<sup>th</sup> of January; Francis Wormald, ed., *English Benedictine Kalendars before 1100*, vol. I (London: 1939), p. 254 and Francis Wormald, ed., *English Benedictine Kalendars after 1100*, vol. II (London: 1946), p. 117.

<sup>186</sup> Also, Colgrave notes that the salt may have been blessed by Guthlac for use in the preparation of holy water. He further notes that the gelatinous state of the salt must indicate that this miracle happened 'some time' after the saint's death; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 195.

<sup>187</sup> Orderic Vitalis recorded that Pega undertook a pilgrimage to Rome following her brother's death, where she died and was enshrined in a church dedicated to her memory and miraculous abilities; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 342-5. The pseudo-Ingulph conversely describes how Pega lived at a cottage on the site for some time before deciding to undertake a pilgrimage. New details, such as Pega's donation of her brother's scourge and Psalter to the community before her departure, are recorded only by this late source; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 9-10. The legendary aspects of Pega's life were discussed by Prior, "Fact and/or Folklore? The Case for St Pega of Peakirk." *Figs.* 20-2, 40-1.

not have originated in Felix is the date given for Pega's feast, though her entry is also unusual in that it does not record a burial location.<sup>188</sup>

The second entry, dated April 11<sup>th</sup>, commemorates the feast of St Guthlac and his internment at his Crowland hermitage.<sup>189</sup> It is interesting that of all the material in Felix's *vita* from which to choose, Guthlac's entry mentions only the Latin translation of his name, that his sanctity was presaged by God's hand marking the door with a cross at his birth, and how after a year of solitary life, he was succoured at his hermitage by an angelic visitor every morning and night; details that were related in chapters IV-VII and L respectively.<sup>190</sup> Jane Roberts is right to draw our attention to how odd it is that the Martyrologist did not mention the most prominent event in Guthlac's life: how he was dragged by demons to the gates of Hell. Roberts offers that the juxtaposition of these seemingly minor episodes in the Old English *Martyrology* may reflect its redactor's desire to choose events relevant to points in the liturgical year. Indeed, she points out that just a similar arrangement of a momentous birth coupled with the angel of consolation theme can also be found in the Guthlacian office of a late eleventh-century Worcester manuscript and at the end John of Tynemouth's epitome, suggesting that a 'context of worship and prayer may explain [this] selection of miracles...rather than direct consultation from Felix's *Life*'.<sup>191</sup> She has instead suggested that the Guthlac entry might have derived from a 'litany, collect or other martyrology (and of course ultimately from Felix)'.<sup>192</sup> Kotzor, however, still considers both entries to have derived from Felix and while Roberts' theory is interesting, it does not reconcile the obvious similarities between Pega's entry and chapter LIII of Felix's *Life*.<sup>193</sup> Ultimately, the brevity of the Guthlacian entries mean that little can be gleaned from their textual analysis in the interests of this study.

The entries for St Guthlac and his sister survive in British Library Cotton Julius A x, Corpus Christi College Cambridge 196 and Corpus Christi College Cambridge 41 which are three of the five fragmentary surviving manuscripts of the Old English *Martyrology*.<sup>194</sup> The Old English *Martyrology* is written in a Mercian dialect, leading scholars to conclude that the Old English *Martyrology* was first written there, or by the Mercian scholars working in Wessex for King Alfred, though certainly prior to the late ninth century.<sup>195</sup> Indeed, Kotzor's most recent edition of this *Martyrology* suggests that the inclusion of regional saints, like Pega, Higbald, Guthlac and Chad

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<sup>188</sup> Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, January 9, no. 15.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, April 11, no. 63, pp. 52-3. Felix records that Guthlac died on the fourth day of the Easter festival, the eighth day of April in 714. This is the same year recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle* and Jane Roberts has confirmed using the Easter tables that this was the date of Guthlac's death. The Old English *Martyrology* is the first of many texts to record Guthlac's feast on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Texts produced at Crowland post 10<sup>th</sup> c. disregard Felix's dating and specify the year as 715 for some reason. Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 75-6.

<sup>190</sup> Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 77-80.

<sup>191</sup> The Worcester MS is Corpus Christi College Cambridge 198; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, p.10; Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 79.

<sup>192</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," p. 204.

<sup>193</sup> Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, II, pp. 301.

<sup>194</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 203-4.

<sup>195</sup> First suggested by Sisam, *Studies in OEL*, p. 217. The fragment in B.L. MS Add. 23211 dates from the late 9<sup>th</sup> c. making this the latest possible compositional date.

further aid in considering this work to have originated in Mercia.<sup>196</sup> However, nothing more precise is agreed upon in regards to the authorship, provenance or dating of the Old English *Martyrology*.

The difficulties associated with determining the age of vernacular texts similarly affect the final two texts of this grouping; the Old English translation of Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* and its associated homily. Each of these texts survives only in a single manuscript copy, though Paul Gonser's comparative analysis ultimately proved they both stemmed from the same translation of Felix's *vita*.<sup>197</sup> The Old English *Vita Guthlaci* survives in the British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D xxi, though Ker identified that originally this text had been part of Bodleian MS Laud Miscellany 509 because both this manuscript and the vernacular *Life* had been written in the same late eleventh century hand.<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, inclusion of the Old English *Vita Guthlaci* amongst this Miscellany's assortment of Ælfrician translations convinced not only a thirteenth century marginalia writer, but Cotton's librarian and numerous other nineteenth century scholars, that Felix's translator had been Ælfric.<sup>199</sup> It has now come to be agreed that this is impossible on the grounds of linguistic evidence, for though both the Laud Miscellany and the Vespasian *Life* are predominately West Saxon dialect, comparison of these two sources has emphasized their dissimilarity.

Jane Roberts first highlighted that the Vespasian *Life* contains instances of unhistorical gender congruence which, when coupled with the Anglian features already identified by many others, infers not only an earlier date but a non-West Saxon origin for this work.<sup>200</sup> Vleeskruyer and E.G. Stanley suggest this evidence indicates a Mercian origin, though Roberts was once careful to point out that conclusions as to the provenance of the Vespasian *Life* remain debatable.<sup>201</sup> Most notably, Roberts concludes from her linguistic assessment that the scribe who copied the Vespasian *Life* must have had this earlier non-West Saxon exemplar to copy from, for the instances of unhistorical gender congruence that remain are not usually found in West-Saxon texts.<sup>202</sup> The text which survives bears clear evidence of its anonymous translator's intention to keep the form and content of Felix's *vita* intact though the actual number of chapters

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<sup>196</sup> Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, vol.I, pp. 291, 447; vol.II, n.13

<sup>197</sup> Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*. The affiliation of these two works was first suggested by Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*, pp. iv-v.

<sup>198</sup> OEVG occupies folios 18-40 though it used to follow folio 141 in the Bodleian MS Laud Miscellany 509; N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: 1957), no. 344, pp.422-4. A less comprehensive assessment which preceded Ker's assessment was done by Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*, pp. iv-v; one of two editions of this text (the other: Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*).

<sup>199</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," p. 202 and Jane Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (New York: 1986), pp. 365-6. Roberts notes that the majority of the Pentateuch and Joshua translations of the Bodleian MS are considered Ælfric's translations.

<sup>200</sup> Roberts' article addresses the issue that historically few scholars have ventured into a linguistic assessment of the Vespasian *Life*, though she points out that Klaeber, Jordan, Gonser, I. Geisel, Vleeskruyer, Kotzor and J. Campbell briefly touch on its Anglian features; Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" pp. 366-9.

<sup>201</sup> R. Vleeskruyer, *The Life of St Chad: An Old English Homily* (Amsterdam: 1953), pp. 37, 49 n.5 and its review by Eric G. Stanley, *English and Germanic Studies* 6 (1957) contra Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, p.51. Also Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 202-3 and later where she states this as fact Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 80.

<sup>202</sup> Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" p. 366.

has been reduced to a prologue and twenty two.<sup>203</sup> This *Life* has further been divided, perhaps by its West Saxon scribe, into four sections that chronologically group episodes covering Guthlac's birth (1), his baptism until his decision to become a hermit (2), and his settlement at Crowland (3). The episodes grouped in the last section of the Vespasian *Life* have been described by Colgrave as the '*Vita proper*' for they handle only Guthlac's lifestyle, his trials and the miracles he performs, at his hermitage (4).<sup>204</sup> The importance of this section is clearly emphasized by the fact that each chapter heading from this point onwards has been individually numbered in metallic red ink with a corresponding chapter title.<sup>205</sup> In form, this separates the Vespasian *Life* from the Old English saints' *lives* of the Cynewulfian canon because it reads as a closely literal translation of Felix's Latin, particularly in the fourth, red-titled section. Nevertheless, these factors cannot collaboratively prove that a translation was made of Felix's *vita* before the mid-tenth century though comparison to the Guthlacian homily does allow for an earlier dating range to be more generally accepted.<sup>206</sup>

Homily XXIII of the Vercelli book is well-recognized as a variation of surviving translation though it only deals with Guthlac's descent and rescue from the portal of Hell, as covered in chapters XXX-XXXIV of Felix's *vita*. The ending too, is unique, for this Homily describes Guthlac's entry to heaven as occurring immediately following his return, without rambling through the various miracles and death scene related by both Felix and his translator. That this focus may reflect the sort of material which was in circulation after Guthlac's death was qualified by Roberts' when she suggested that Guthlac's 'constancy' at the Hell-mouth represented something 'different from the pattern' set down by Felix according to hagiographical convention.<sup>207</sup> On its own, the narrative focus of this homily does not prove its early composition though both Gonser and Roberts' comparative analyses of the language conclude that the Homily contains more words than the *Life* that are 'infrequently found in the West Saxon translations associated with Alfred and found scarcely at all in the standard late West Saxon texts.'<sup>208</sup> Roberts points out that Gonser's edition fails to discuss the significance of the 'updated' features which comparative analysis reveals. Instead she surmises that the original Old English translation of Felix's *vita*

<sup>203</sup> Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* has a prologue and fifty-three numbered chapters.

<sup>204</sup> Colgrave was able to generally conclude from the surviving manuscripts of Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* that this point was clearly and regularly marked by 1) Felix's second reference of his sources and 2) by uniform chapter headings afterwards. This can also be clearly seen through comparison to the Vespasian translation of this text; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 182 n.2.

<sup>205</sup> This section begins: '*Be þam halgan were hu he eardode on þære stowe*' ('About the holy man, how he lived in that place') and is further marked by space in the manuscript to separate the appearance of St Bartholomew and Guthlac's temptation to despair from Guthlac's rescue from the gates of Hell, the latter of which is also marked by an enlarged colour capital. Description and translation by Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" pp. 364-5.

<sup>206</sup> A dating agreed upon by Napier and Gonser; Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, p. 95. Also Vleeskruyer, *Life of Chad*, p. 55, no. 17.

<sup>207</sup> She contrasts this episode with Antonian comparisons in Felix's *vita* and compares them instead to the otherworldly visions of Fursa and Drythelm. The miracles and prophesies that follow in the Vespasian *Life* as in Felix are 'expectations of hagiographical biography', unlike *Guthlac A* and perhaps Homily XXIII; Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" pp. 373-4.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, pp. 367-9. Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, pp. 94-6. Also *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by D.G. Scragg, EETS 300 (Oxford: 1992), pp. lxxi-lxxix for the scribe's tolerance of them in the Vercelli manuscript.



must have been a longer, more literal text which was then thoughtfully revised, in the case of the *Vespasian Life*, to update it for a West Saxon audience. She concedes that though there are some revisions to archaic features in the Homily, its independent revision still overwhelmingly advocates that the original Old English translation of Felix's *Life* was made in Alfred's time.<sup>209</sup> The manuscript evidence similarly harmonizes with Roberts' insights on this particular homily.

The Guthlac Homily, numbered XXIII, is the final homily in a collection of poems and prose homilies contained within Vercelli Biblioteca Capitolare MS.CXVII, known more commonly as the Vercelli book.<sup>210</sup> Number XXIII is the final text in this codex, following the poems *Andreas*, Cynewulf's *The Fates of the Apostles*, *Soul and Body I*, *The Dream of the Rood*, Cynewulf's *Elene*, a homiletic poem fragment and the twenty-two prose homilies that separate these six poems. The Guthlacian homily may have even been chosen for this collection due to its ability to complement the *miles Christi* and judgement themes of its preceding entry, *Elene* and as such, may provide some insight to the interest of this material for preaching; a function which has recently been applied to the Vercelli compilation by E. Treharne and S. Zacher.<sup>211</sup> Like the Guthlac poems in the Exeter book, its placement testifies to the significance of thematic continuity and the adaptability of the Guthlacian legend to points in the liturgical year. It has been interpreted that the Vercelli Book contains homilies that would have been appropriate for Christmas (2), for Epiphany (4), for Lent (3), for Rogationtide (6) and feast days, making it possible that such a compilation was intended for personal use by someone, as Treharne suggests, 'most responsible for disseminating religious teachings –senior ecclesiastics, monastic and regular.'<sup>212</sup>

The Vercelli codex was written throughout by a single hand which has been dated between 960-80 by Keller and supported by internal references to the Danes in Homily XI. Förster, Ker, Sisam, Szarmach and Scragg all more generally concur with a late-tenth century dating.<sup>213</sup> The dialect in which it is written is mainly late West Saxon though there is some variation throughout reflecting the pre-Vercelli origins of the texts themselves. Concerning Homily XXIII, Vleeskruyer was the first scholar to label this homily Mercian, though erroneously based his theory upon it deriving from the *Vespasian Life*.<sup>214</sup> A more technical examination was then undertaken by Donald Scragg who more specifically postulated an East Midlands or general

<sup>209</sup> Also Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 69, 80. Swanton postulates that 'no doubt simple vernacular prose versions soon followed' Felix's *Life*; M. Swanton, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London: 1975), p. xv.

<sup>210</sup> The Guthlac homily begins on folio 133' and finishes on the last folio, 135'; Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII*, pp. xix-xxiii; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 202-3.

<sup>211</sup> É.Ó Carragáin, "How Did the Vercelli Collector Interpret 'the Dream of the Rood'?", in *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen*, ed. P.M. Tilling, *Occasional Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Coleraine: 1981); Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's 'Vita Sancti Guthlaci'," p. 375; *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by D.G. Scragg, *EETS 300* (Oxford: 1992), p. xli. Elaine Treharne, "The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book" in A. Minnis and J. Roberts eds., *Text, Image, Interpretation* (Turnhout: 2007), 253-66; S. Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: 2009).

<sup>212</sup> Elaine Treharne, "The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book" in A. Minnis and J. Roberts eds., *Text, Image, Interpretation* (Turnhout: 2007), pp. 265-6.

<sup>213</sup> Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII*, pp. xx; *The Vercelli Book*, ed. by G.P. Krapp (New York: 1932), pp. xi-xx, xxxix; *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by D.G. Scragg, *EETS 300* (Oxford: 1992), pp. xxxix, lxxiii.

<sup>214</sup> Vleeskruyer, *Life of Chad*, pp. 57-8.

Anglian provenance for this homily though he explained anomalous features as due to a prior transmission through Kent.<sup>215</sup> Thus, while Förster suggested a Worcester origin and Gradon and C. Sisam put forth possible houses in the southeast, Scragg has explained these Kentish features through comparative analysis, positing that the Vercelli scribe worked in Canterbury c.959-88, the later years of Archbishop Dunstan.<sup>216</sup> Little else has been gleaned from the Vercelli book, though K. Sisam's identification of a North Italian, eleventh-century script amongst its pages clarified that this codex travelled to Italy before this point.<sup>217</sup> It is generally thought that this manuscript's discovery at Vercelli on the road to Rome reflects that it was intended to be a gift, brought by an English pilgrim who either forgot or donated the book and S. Zacher has further explored how the language, style and plainness of the Vercelli manuscript might suggest that it was originally intended for private reading, perhaps for the Anglo-Saxon *schola* in Rome.<sup>218</sup> Cumulatively the Vespasian *Life* and the Vercelli Homily testify that although fewer versions of the vernacular translation of Felix survive than the Latin *vita*, their shared exemplar was still considered a relevant source as long as three hundred years after its first translation.<sup>219</sup>

The aim of this section was to set out that despite some indecision regarding their dating and origins, these vernacular versions offer substantial contributions to the study of this cult. The very fact that no other cult boasts the same range warrants consideration of the special appeal of this material for an audience unable to read Latin, as does the fact that dating considerations strongly suggest that vernacular versions of this legend were produced as early as the late eighth-early ninth centuries, closely following Felix's conventional *vita*. For these reasons, they should be considered the next chronological stage. The vernacular variations can be analyzed like Felix's *vita* to show how the legend was adapted to different purposes and perhaps even specific audiences. Indeed, the manuscript evidence for the Exeter book suggests that it may have originally belonged to a layman's household before being given to a community. So too do the Mercian origins of the *Martyrology* entries and the Old English translation of Felix's *vita*, from which the Vespasian and Vercelli texts have ultimately derived, imply that Felix's claims of Mercian interest were not exaggerated nor were they confined to Æthelbald's reign.

<sup>215</sup> D.G. Scragg ed., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS 300 (Oxford: 1992), pp.xlii, lxxi-lxxix. Also Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII*, pp. xxi-ii.

<sup>216</sup> Vleeskruyer concurs with Förster's suggestions; Vleeskruyer, *Life of Chad*, pp. 57-8. Contra Pamela Gradon who puts forth Winchester or Canterbury, Celia Sisam who suggests that the Vercelli book was the product of a small house, like Barking; all summarized by Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII*, p. xx. *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by D.G. Scragg, EETS 300 (Oxford: 1992), p. xlii.

<sup>217</sup> Sisam, *Studies in OEL*, pp. 113-6. Also Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII*, p. xxi summarizes a number of speculations of how it reached there.

<sup>218</sup> S. Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: 2009), pp. 5, 25.

<sup>219</sup> Roberts' synopsis of the manuscript identifies that an eleventh or twelfth century hand has added glosses throughout the biblical material but not the Vespasian folios 'where their absence suggests that the *Life of Guthlac* had by this time waned in popularity and use.' She mentions only one scribal gloss in the Guthlac folios; Roberts, "Inventory," p. 202.

## The Norman Developments

At the same time that so many of the vernacular materials were being copied into their surviving codices, new Latin compositions were commissioned by Crowland's Norman abbots to reinvigorate interest in their waning house and its saints.<sup>220</sup> If Crowland had produced any Guthlacian materials in house prior to the twelfth century, they regrettably could not have survived the great fire of 1091 which Crowland's chronicler, supposedly the first Norman abbot Ingulph, describes as levelling the church, chapter house, abbot's lodging and most devastatingly, the library with its 700 manuscripts.<sup>221</sup> The Norman abbots who followed Ingulph can thus be lauded for their exemplary, and enduring, contributions to Crowland's renewal: Geoffrey of Saint-Évroul for obtaining Orderic Vitalis to document the local traditions which were all that remained of Crowland's history and for rebuilding the damage wrought by fire and earthquake; Waltheof, abbot-kinsman of the martyred earl, for translating Guthlac's remains on August 23 1136 to a more prominent shrine; Edward of Ramsey for not only commissioning the *Miracula* and *Translatio* which survive for Guthlac in the Douai MS 852 but for persevering to rapidly rebuild the majority of the structures damaged by a second large fire in 1143 and finally, Robert de Redingas of Leominster for completing Edward's repairs and ornamenting Guthlac's shrine.<sup>222</sup> The Norman Developments stage represents a period in which literary, artistic, architectural and social expressions were actively encouraged for the benefit of Crowland's cults and ultimately, patronage of its community. Four important texts are considered here.

The first of these Norman developments would certainly be Orderic Vitalis' *Abbrevatio*. Orderic tells us that he made an 'abbreviated and clarified' version of Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* at the request of Prior Wulfwin while enjoying the hospitality of Abbot Geoffrey and the community for five weeks.<sup>223</sup> While Chibnall attests that the date of this visit cannot be determined, his visit must have occurred a few years into Geoffrey's abbacy, perhaps sometime between the years 1114-23.<sup>224</sup> Crowland's ability to obtain Orderic's services at all must have been due to the fact that Geoffrey had formerly been prior of Orderic's house, Saint-Évroul.<sup>225</sup> Nor could this visit

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<sup>220</sup> For instance, abbot Ulfecytel (1052-1076) obtained the remains of the famously executed Earl Waltheof for Crowland in 1076; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 320-3.

<sup>221</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 197-208. The pseudo-Ingulph is otherwise notable for his translation of Waltheof's body from the chapter house to the church (the chronicle records that neither the tombs of Waltheof nor Guthlac were harmed by the flames or the collapse of the church roof).

<sup>222</sup> The dates of these abbots are difficult to establish for Peter of Blois terminates its narrative before death of Geoffrey and the Second Continuation does not fill in this timeline *Ibid*, pp. 141, 233, 269, 273-4, 282. Crowland's chronicle records the Norman abbot's dates as: Ingulph 1071-1109, Geoffrey of Saint-Évroul 1109-? (not-recorded), Edward of Ramsey 1141-1171, Robert of Reading 1171-91. Stukeley appears to have gotten confused by the Crowland Chronicle and to have recorded both an abbot Joffrid and a Geoffrey to have split the period between 1109-1142 with one monk called Walden; W.J. Hextall, *Some Account of Croyland Abbey, Lincs., From the MS and Drawings of the Rev. Wm. Stukeley* (London: 1856), pp. 13-4. Colgrave gives the following dates: Ingulph 1085-1110, Geoffrey 1110-? (not given), Waltheof fl.1136, Edward 1142-72; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 10-2. The dating of Geoffrey appears the most attainable due to Orderic's record that Geoffrey was appointed to abbacy at Crowland in 1109 and that he died fifteen years later, in 1124; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, vol. II, book IV, pp. 348-51.

<sup>223</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, vol. II, book IV, pp. 324-5.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 25. Orderic records Geoffrey's death in 1124, p. 51.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, vol. II, book IV, pp. 348-51.

have been more appropriately arranged, for with the destruction of Crowland's library, written documentation was needed to substantiate its ancient claims. Orderic's reputation ensured such a validation. Included in his writings on Crowland were important local traditions concerning the acquisition of martyred Earl Waltheof's body and Æthelbald's grant of the lands around Crowland to Guthlac in perpetuity. The latter tradition invaluablely claimed that Crowland Abbey had been founded by Guthlac and Æthelbald and had been continuously held by monks ever since.<sup>226</sup> Orderic even names his sources as the subprior Ansgot and the most venerable members of the community to ensure the repute of Crowland's claims.

The *Abbrevatio* survives in a single manuscript, occupying folios 47-52 of former Crowland manuscript; Douai 852. It follows a copy of Felix's *Life*, presumably to supply a foundation legend which is conspicuously absent from Felix's writings.<sup>227</sup> This manuscript was already described in some length earlier in this chapter though the *Abbrevatio*, the martyrdom of Waltheof, an epitaph and a more expansive history of Crowland's abbots up to Geoffrey was also integrated by Orderic Vitalis into his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. He includes in this latter text an epitaph on Earl Waltheof which he says he '*mox ille iussis paruit et corde meditata sic ore protuli*', implying that he produced some of his writings on-site.<sup>228</sup> Nevertheless, a record of Geoffrey's death testifies that this material was edited for use in his *Historia* after 1124.<sup>229</sup> It has also been frequently remarked that there is little to distinguish between Orderic's *Abbrevatio* and his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. This may be true in regards to the Guthlac material however the Douai MS 852 contains a number of separate accounts of the martyred Waltheof by William of Ramsey and others, while Orderic's *Historia* contains his own epitaph and account of earl's death and translation. The Douai MS 852 also contains a short list of Crowland's abbots which contrasts with Orderic's short descriptive biographies.<sup>230</sup>

The Douai MS 852 is further notable as it contains the only known copy of two texts written to commemorate events which occurred at Crowland during the twelfth century. The first of these texts is the *Translatio Beatus Guthlaci* which describes in detail Abbot Waltheof's translation of this saint's remains on '*quadrincentesimo vicesimo, anno ab incarnatione domini millesimo centesimo tricesimo sexto, anno tercio regi Stephani regis Anglie, decimo kalendas septembris, die lune*'.<sup>231</sup> The dating and descriptions of this event are extremely invaluable for no other record of this event has survived. Moreover, its anonymous author's interest in recording important witnesses makes it possible to discern that the translation took place only a few years

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, vol. II, book IV, pp. 321-51. Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 71-2.

<sup>227</sup> Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis* II, pp. 37-60.

<sup>228</sup> 'He speedily obeyed their commands, and after meditating in his heart recited these lines,' Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, vol. II, book IV, pp.350-1.

<sup>229</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, vol. II, book IV, pp. 350-1, vol. I, p. 28. Roberts, "Inventory," p. 210.

<sup>230</sup> The Bollandists first made this observation in regards to the abbreviation of Felix. Roberts' and Colgrave's descriptions do not discuss these differences; Roberts, "Inventory," p. 205 citing the Bollandists, and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 11-2, 40, whose entries are even more confusing since he refers to both Abbot Geoffrey, former prior of Saint-Évroul, and Godfrey of Orléans though they are the same person!

Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis* II, pp. 37-60.

<sup>231</sup> Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis* II, pp. 37-60; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, Appendix III, p. 722.

after Alexander became bishop of Lincoln and Waltheof, abbot of Crowland, attesting to their mutual enthusiasm for this revival. The second text, the *Miracula Beatus Guthlaci*, complements its predecessor by describing miracles that occurred during the abbacies of Ulfcetyl and Ingulph in order to show Guthlac's potency and continuous involvement. This text is interesting because it is the only Norman text to really promote Guthlac's continued efficacy.

The *Translatio* occupies folios 32b-38 immediately following Orderic's *Abbrevatio* in the Douai MS 852. The *Miracula* then follows the *Translatio* on folios 38a-46b.<sup>232</sup> The loss of the final folio of the *Miracula* now leaves this piece incomplete though a full version of this text existed in the time of Peter of Blois for his epitome, copied later by John of Tynemouth and included in the *Nova Legenda Anglie*, includes an ending with miracles unknown from anywhere else.<sup>233</sup> This manuscript then appears to have travelled to Lyre, where in 1672 it was referenced by Mabillon and d'Achéry, before reaching Douai by 1675, when it was copied into the Bollandists' entry on St Guthlac in the *Acta Sanctorum*.<sup>234</sup> Colgrave has since postulated that the no-longer existent Lyre manuscript must have been a transcription of Crowland's compilation in the Douai because, though the Bollandists cited multiple texts, he identified substantial agreement between the texts found in the *Acta Sanctorum* and Douai MS 852.<sup>235</sup> The *Translatio* and *Miracula* were copied in a different, later twelfth century hand than the one which copied Felix's *Life* and Orderic's *Abbrevatio* into the Douai MS 852, leading Colgrave to consider both these works to have been composed twenty years after the actual translation, during the abbacy of Edward (c. 1170).<sup>236</sup> There is, however, no internal textual indication that the *Miracula* and *Translatio* were composed so long after the actual Translation.

The final text to be loosely considered a 'Norman development' was the creation of a Chronicle devoted to recording the history and traditions of Crowland Abbey. It was apparently begun by Abbot Ingulph, Crowland's first Norman abbot (c.1076-1109), who set out its purpose to document 'who were the founders and benefactors of our monastery, at what period it was founded, and by whose alms food and the other necessities of life are here provided for us; and at the same time to learn what estates or possessions our respective benefactors have bestowed as alms upon us.'<sup>237</sup> Clearly, Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* was insufficient in this respect though if there had been any materials which addressed this need, they were certainly lost in the devastating fire of 1091.<sup>238</sup> Thus Ingulph's *Historia Croilandensis* provided the much needed charters of many kings of England, the benefactions of local nobility, descriptions of Crowland's

<sup>232</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 200-1.

<sup>233</sup> The extended version is indicated by Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 725-7, marked on p. 725, n.2. It is printed from the Trinity College Dublin MS B.2.7.

<sup>234</sup> Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum*, pp. 37-60; d'Achéry and Mabillon, eds., *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, pp. 263-84 and briefly, Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 199-200.

<sup>235</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 45.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 11, 40. Roberts notes the texts but does not discuss their dating; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 200-1.

<sup>237</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p.1.

<sup>238</sup> Riley notes that during a dispute in 1189, Abbot Robert uses Felix's *vita* as proof, not any Anglo-Saxon charters; *Ibid*, pp. x, 275-6. The fire of 1091 is recorded on pp. 197-203. Also Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, vol. II, Book IV, pp. 346-7.

lands and privileges and most importantly, the legend that Crowland was founded by St Guthlac and King Æthelbald and inhabited continuously by monks since 716 A.D. It is to be noted, however, that these materials have long been considered a forgery due not only to their historical unlikelihood but the fact that documents created prior to Ingulph's abbacy were probably lost in the aforementioned disaster. Various anachronisms have long since been identified not only in the writings now referred to as the work of a pseudo-Ingulph, but also its directly appending continuation, undertaken by another impersonator; a pseudo-Peter de Blois.<sup>239</sup> Felix Liebermann first postulated a date for these forgeries somewhere in the fourteenth century though his contemporaries Searle and Riley put forth a later dating in the fifteenth century because the second, third and fourth continuations of Ingulph's original *Historia Croilandensis* are primarily concerned with events which occurred during this period.<sup>240</sup> However, Bolton has reasonably postulated that some passages of Ingulph's *Historia* may have been put together before 1200 because they are not reliant upon Peter de Blois' *vita*, which became the definitive text at Crowland after this date. Furthermore, he suggests that it is impossible for us to now know whether Orderic Vitalis used Ingulph's *Historia*, whether both used a common source, or whether the pseudo-Ingulph made use of both Felix and Orderic.<sup>241</sup> Either way, Searle's observation that Ingulph's *Historia Croilandensis* shows a dependence upon pre-twelfth century materials rightly identifies its earliest possible date as coinciding with some of Crowland's earliest Norman abbots.<sup>242</sup> The concerns of the pseudo-Ingulph relevantly reflect, if nothing else, the issues which the abbots after Ingulph and community faced.

Part of the difficulty in postulating the date of the Ingulph's *Historia Croilandensis* and even its continuations is that no medieval manuscript of this text has survived; only a transcription in Arundel MS 178 that has been dated to the sixteenth century.<sup>243</sup> Riley records that Crowland had still kept a copy after the Dissolution in a chest locked by three keys. However, this copy appears to have disappeared by the end of the seventeenth century, as did the two 'ancient copies' in the possession of Sir J. Marsham and the Cottonian Library by the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>244</sup> Despite the loss of these manuscripts, it is clear that Crowland's *Chronicle* was created at Crowland, for the benefit of its community.

These four texts and the events that they describe evidence above all the Norman abbots' thoughtful planning and enthusiasm for their monastery. Were it not for their efforts,

<sup>239</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*. Ingulph's *Historia Croilandensis* discusses events between 716-1089 A.D. on pp. 1-223; Peter de Blois' Continuation, 1100-1117 A.D. on pp. 224-70; an Anonymous second continuation from 1155-1469, pp. 271-452; an Anonymous third continuation from 1460-86 A.D. on pp. 453-510 and an Anonymous fourth continuation discussing only 1486 A.D. on pp. 511-33.

<sup>240</sup> de Gray Birch, ed., *Memorials*; Proney and Cox, eds., *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-86*; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*; Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 71. Also briefly Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 7-8 and Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 213-4.

<sup>241</sup> W.F. Bolton, "The Latin Revisions of Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*," *Medieval Studies* 21 (1959), pp. 41-2.

<sup>242</sup> W.G. Searle, *Ingulf and the Historia Croylandensis: An Investigation Attempted* (Cambridge: 1894), p. 208. In agreement, Roberts, "Inventory," p. 213.

<sup>243</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. ix-xv.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*, p. ix.

Crowland and the legends associated with it could have been extinguished by any one of the natural disasters that struck during this century. The very fact that Crowland was forced to recreate its history meant that many new elements entered the legend at this point, altering the Guthlac legend substantially. For these reasons, it is worthwhile to contrast Crowland's interests and adaptations at this time with both the character of the early cult and its contemporary needs. The dating and provenance of these materials is also significant as it shows that no new Guthlacian texts were being created elsewhere by the twelfth century, indicating that interest in this saint had diminished and that the legend had become the intellectual property of Crowland. None of the twelfth-century abbots contributed a more diverse range of materials than the last abbot of this century, Henry de Longchamp.

### **The Longchamp Revival**

The second continuation of the *Historia Croilandensis* explains that Robert de Redingas fell ill and died at Cottenham while in the midst of settling a dispute with Spalding. When William de Longchamp, bishop of Ely, chancellor to King Richard and papal legate heard the news, he requested the king to consider his brother Henry, then a monk of Evesham, for the position.<sup>245</sup> Henry de Longchamp came to be abbot of Crowland in 1191. His forty-six year abbacy marked an even more prolific stage in Crowland's development in which new texts were commissioned, visual representations and architectural settings constructed and new relics promoted. To encourage the cult of St Guthlac, Henry again translated his remains on April 27 1196 and commissioned both a new epitome of Felix's *Life* from Peter de Blois and a poem from Peter's translation by Henry of Avranches.<sup>246</sup> Colgrave also considers the Douai collection to have been compiled during Henry's abbacy because Peter's epitome includes miracles which are found only in the Douai *Miracula*.<sup>247</sup> There are other aspects, however, which help to associate the Douai MS 852 with Henry's time. Colgrave identifies that the first thirty-six abbots listed in this manuscript up to Henry, were written in the same hand while those that came afterwards were noted individually.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, this abbot also translated Earl Waltheof's remains and is attributed with acquiring the bones of St Neot, which may explain the inclusion of a number of pieces relating to the Earl Waltheof and a *Life of St Neot* in this collection.<sup>249</sup> The diverse range

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, p. 282.

<sup>246</sup> The new shrine is described at length in Ibid, pp. 295-6. The Chronicle gives the date as 'the fifth day before the calends of May, being Saturday' 1194 (April 27<sup>th</sup> 1196).

<sup>247</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 14, 40-2. Roberts too considers that Peter worked from the Douai MS; Roberts, "Inventory," p. 206.

<sup>248</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 40.

<sup>249</sup> It is curious that Peter of Blois' continuation of the *Historia Croilandensis* includes a miracle in which St Neot, St Bartholomew and St Guthlac appear in a vision to a monk of St Alban's in order to chastise his criticism of the earl. This miracle is recorded as occurring during Geoffrey's abbacy. The pseudo-Ingulph's account counters an earlier acquisition of Neot's relics for it records that they were brought to Whittlesey by Lady Lefwina of Elnophesbyry, sister to Abbot Osketyl of Crowland, because they were not displayed 'with becoming honour, and were exposed to the ravages of the Danes'. Lefwina's donation is recorded in the *Historia Croilandensis* as happening in the year 992. Riley, ed., *Pseudo-*

of Guthlacian materials that were produced during Henry's abbacy warrant not only their own independent grouping here, but the distinction of representing Crowland's golden age.

One of the most interesting developments to have been created towards the end of the twelfth century was the designs for a visual representation of the Guthlac legend. It is impossible to know whether these designs were intended to be used for wall paintings, as Warner has suggested, or whether an antiquarian's retrieval of a glass fragment 'near the great west window with ornaments and treatment very similar to the aforesaid drawings' meant that they were plans for glass.<sup>250</sup> Nothing similar to the eighteen roundels depicting important stages of Guthlac's life and Crowland's foundation on British Library Harley Roll Y.6 has survived elsewhere.<sup>251</sup> Colgrave points out, however, that a thirteenth-century catalogue from Leominster once registered a *Rotula cum vita sancti Guthlaci anglie scripta*, though here each of the eighteen medallions has brief Latin captions which help to identify the illustration of episodes found in Felix's *Life* and Orderic's *Abbrevatio*.<sup>252</sup>

The Harley Roll consists of five separate strips of varying lengths whose beginning, including any heading which might have given an indication of the Roll's purpose, has been lost. Rolls were historically used for accounts and sometimes, cartularies, memoranda, chronicles and brief narratives with commentary, making the illustrations here unusual though Clanchy suggests that it could have been intended for laymen of restricted literacy or as an offering to be presented at the altar.<sup>253</sup> The date of these drawings can be narrowed using internal evidence because the eighteenth medallion depicts various benefactors holding scrolls upon which is written their donations and Alan de Croun's donation of Frieston priory could not have been before the foundation of this house in 1141.<sup>254</sup> Warner has also suggested that this scene's illustration of a house-shaped shrine, supported by columns above a platform with steps may represent the renovation that accompanied the 1196 translation.<sup>255</sup> This interpretation becomes all the more reasonable considering that Guthlac's shrine appears markedly different in the two previous

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*Ingulph HC*, pp. 111, 241-3. Colgrave considers the Waltham texts to have been written to accompany a translation of this saint in 1219 and the *Life of St Neot* to have been written in honour of Crowland's acquisition of these relics in 1213. I am not sure where he gets these dates however, for the *Historia Croilandensis* appears preoccupied with a marsh dispute and does not mention these events (except in the case of Neot, who the pseudo-Ingulph says was acquired much earlier). Colgrave also errs and records the translation of St Neot to Crowland as happening in 1213 only pages earlier; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 14 contra pp. 39-42.

<sup>250</sup> Warner, *The Harley Roll*, p. 20; Canham's remark cited by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 12, n.4. Roberts also considers it possible that these drawings may be plans for 'shrine decorations, altar decorations, spandrels in chapels or sculptured reliefs over imposing doorways.' Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 208, 222-3. Market Deeping church, which once belonged to Crowland, has successfully incorporated these designs into stained glass.

<sup>251</sup> The Harley Roll is vellum roll, drawn in black, yellow and green inks, measuring 9 feet by 6.5 inches. Warner, *The Harley Roll*, p. 1. See figs. 1-18.

<sup>252</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 12, n.3 cites R.M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*, 1969 ed. (New York: 1952), p. 98.

<sup>253</sup> M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307* (Oxford: 1993), p. 142-56. The eighteenth roundel is depicted on the cover.

<sup>254</sup> First identified by Warner, *The Harley Roll*, pp. 16-7. Also, M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307*, pp. 156, 257. Clanchy points out that scrolls were used to display speech such as might have been offered at altar. Fig. 18.

<sup>255</sup> Warner, *The Harley Roll*, p. 17. Concurred by Henderson, "Imagery of St Guthlac," p. 84 and Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 72.



medallions.<sup>256</sup> Indeed, Wormald's assessment of the style of these illustrations concurs with a dating around 1200.<sup>257</sup> It is however important to be wary of such interpretation as not all the architectural settings depicted in these roundels should be considered representative of Crowland's architecture. The fourth medallion, for example, shows Guthlac helping to build a large, ornate chapel from stone which contrasts stylistically and discordantly, with the pre-Conquest descriptions of a humble oratory.<sup>258</sup>

The Latin captions on each medallion similarly serve to link this Roll with Crowland. Firstly, Colgrave identified that the form '*Beccelmus*' was used for the name of Guthlac's attendant only in the Harley Roll and in the Crowland produced Douai MS 852.<sup>259</sup> Then in the eleventh medallion, Bishop Hæddi is attributed with ordaining Guthlac. It was Hædda of Lichfield, not his contemporary Hæddi of Winchester, who is credited with ordaining Guthlac in Felix's *Life* and Wormald points out that this confusion of contemporaries is also apparent in two Crowland calendars of the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.<sup>260</sup> The Harley Roll is similar to Orderic's *Abbrevatio* in that it is concerned with creating the foundation legend and setting Crowland up as a cult centre. The roundels label Æthelbald as *rex* and depict him wearing a crown, in contrast to Felix's descriptions of the harried exile.<sup>261</sup> The fact that Æthelbald is shown as a king in earlier roundels serves to support the legend, labelled on a scroll in the eighteenth roundel, that Æthelbald granted land at Crowland to Guthlac for a monastery. Clearly, the Harley Roll is another example of the Crowland community's intention to circulate famous and antique claims, though they contradict Felix's *vita*.

In addition, it is to be expected that the Harley Roll, as a Crowland material, visually represents other important aspects of the legend that were requisite for the community to perpetuate the cult of its supposed founder. Perhaps Felix's claims to the uncorrupted state of Guthlac's body were premature or an unfortunate inaccuracy resulting from hagiographical borrowing, as only his bones are mentioned in subsequent records.<sup>262</sup> Even these had been divided up, for Glastonbury, Thorney and Abingdon claimed to possess parts.<sup>263</sup> The Harley Roll

<sup>256</sup> The sixteenth and seventeenth medallions display a rectangular slab tomb that is only elevated to waist height while the eighteenth medallion displays an ornate house shaped shrine supported by columns with steps leading up to it. Complete reproductions of all the medallions can be found in plates I-XVIII of Warner, *The Harley Roll*.

<sup>257</sup> Wormald, *English Drawings*, p. 262.

<sup>258</sup> The unlikelihood that there was a monastery at Crowland before the tenth century will be shown in extensive detail in the subsequent chapter. See fig.1.

<sup>259</sup> The form '*Beccelmus*' is used in medallions 6, 9, 13-6. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 13. Another error is the Harley illustrator's labelling Ebba, not Ælfthryth, abbess of Repton in the third medallion.

<sup>260</sup> Wormald, ed., *EBK before 1100*, p. 260 and Wormald, ed., *EBK after 1100*, I, pp. 114, 123.

<sup>261</sup> In particular, the opening to VG, XLIX; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 148-51.

<sup>262</sup> Felix records that Guthlac's body was found uncorrupted by Pega and brethren gathered at her request twelve months after his death. Much of Felix's account of these events relied upon Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*, though Cuthbert was buried for a much longer eleven years before he was disinterred; *Ibid*, LI; *VCP*, XLII. Only Guthlac's bones are mentioned in the *Miracula* and *Translatio*; Colgrave, "*St Guthlac of Crowland: A Durham Incident*." Also Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis*, II, p. 55. I have a contention with Colgrave's conclusion that Guthlac was not included in lists of uncorrupted saints compiled by Ælfric and later, by William of Malmesbury because his cult was 'not so popular'. Clearly, Guthlac's remains were reduced to bones prior to the twelfth century (and likely before!) which would have exempted him from these lists, regardless of his popularity. See Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 10, 194.

<sup>263</sup> Glastonbury was given 'a great part of Guthlac's body' by Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester. Thorney had an arm bone and whip while Abingdon claimed to possess a rib; compiled by Roberts, "Inventory," p. 218.

subsequently makes no mention of Guthlac's supposed incorruptibility in favour of developing the stories of two secondary relics preserved from Guthlac's lifetime. These relics then figure prominently in the legend from this time onwards. Guthlac's Psalter, distinctive in its unusual binding, figures in almost every roundel of the Harley Roll. It first appears in the third medallion, held under Abbess Ebba's arm as she watches Guthlac getting tonsured and is either held by the saint or near him in every scene which follows.<sup>264</sup> That it also appears in the fifteenth and seventeenth medallions held by those caring for the shrine and by Guthlac himself when he appears to Æthelbald in a vision ensures we are clear of the Psalter's importance. Indeed, this relic appears to have persevered until at least 1538, for an eyewitness account in that year referred to having seen an Old English Psalter at the abbey called St Guthlac's.<sup>265</sup>

The story of Guthlac's scourge is likewise integrated into the Harley Roll medallions to establish its associations with the saint. It enters in the eighth medallion as the weapon St Bartholomew gave Guthlac to fight the demons which have dragged him to Hell. We can be sure of this interpretation because the next scene shows Guthlac combatively using the scourge against an animal-faced demon that has invaded his chapel.<sup>266</sup> While the scourge figures in fewer medallions than the Psalter, its centrality in these two roundels recommends its significance. Neither the scourge nor the Psalter are described in any other materials from earlier periods, though the legend that they were given to the Abbot Kenulph by Pega a year after Guthlac's death is mentioned by Henry of Avranches and the pseudo-Ingulph.<sup>267</sup> That the seal of Abbot Henry of Longchamp also shows Bartholomew holding a book while giving a scourge to St Guthlac serves to confirm that the Harley Roll was created after he became abbot in 1191.<sup>268</sup>

St Bartholomew's gift of the scourge also found architectural representation during this period on Crowland's elaborate western front. Unlike the Harley Roll which may have been seen by relatively few eyes, the statues that surround the great west window and the reliefs inhabiting the tympanum above the door were undoubtedly intended to regale visitors and advertise Crowland's laudable origins. Unfortunately, much of this facade survives in such a heavily damaged state that, with the loss of some of the statues' heads and arms, identifications cannot be made.<sup>269</sup> Those that remain give some indication of Crowland's splendour prior to the

<sup>264</sup> Guthlac distinctive Psalter can be seen in 8 medallions, see figs. 3, 6, 8-9, 11-2, 15, 17.

<sup>265</sup> Colgrave records an incident in 1538 when a John Lambert declared that had seen St Guthlac's Psalter at Crowland, recognized its language as Old English and 'took it to be King Alfred's translation of the Psalter'. He also views this as the source of the confused attribution that the translation was Guthlac's. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 14 citing G. Townsend and S.R. Catley, eds., *Foxe's Acts and Monuments* (1887), vol. V, p. 213 and A.S. Cook, *Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers* (London: 1898), p. xviii. Roberts points out that Colgrave's suggestion that Guthlac's Psalter is now known as the Paris Psalter is 'groundless'; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 224-5.

<sup>266</sup> Bartholomew handing Guthlac the scourge occurs in the eighth roundel. Note too that Bartholomew holds Guthlac's distinctive Psalter in this scene; figs. 8-9.

<sup>267</sup> That the Psalter ended up in Pega's care is implied in the 15<sup>th</sup> roundel where it is shown held by Pega's attendant and not, as would have been expected, by Becel who has arrived by boat with news of her brother's death. Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 5 and Henry de Avranches, *MVG*, II. 445-56, 526. Roberts, "Inventory," p. 225.

<sup>268</sup> The best reproduction of this seal can be found in Warner, *The Harley Roll*, p. 23. Also a brief description in Roberts, "Inventory," p. 226. See figs. 7, 19.

<sup>269</sup> There are under a dozen statues to be found inside the nave under the great west window that are too damaged to identify. The only exception is the smiling angel kneeling atop a human bust which was likely too high. See figs. 24-5.

demolition of choir, transepts, central tower and surrounding buildings at the Dissolution and during the years of vandalism that Stukeley describes as accompanying the civil war and the ongoing feud with Spalding.<sup>270</sup>

One of the most important features of the great western front is the narrative quatrefoil carved in relief, located in the tympanum. The autonomous episodes in the centre and four petals of this feature are strikingly reminiscent of the Harley Roll medallions, suggesting that they may have been used as a plan for these designs. Moreover, this quatrefoil advertises some of the details which can be linked to Henry's abbacy. The top episode in the quatrefoil, in particular, shows two demons with furry bodies and wings carrying a horizontal Guthlac while just above hovers a now disfigured shape that presumably once depicted Bartholomew's intervention and gift of the scourge.<sup>271</sup> I tentatively suggest this interpretation because it was such a central component of the legend during Henry's time and because such a reading may help to explain the episode directly below, in the centre of the quatrefoil, showing Guthlac standing opposite two fury demons. Because in the centre scene Guthlac's arms were once upraised in a pose evocative of movement, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this episode once showed Guthlac using his scourge against the demons, like the ninth roundel of the Harley Roll.<sup>272</sup> Contrastingly, Bolton interprets this scene as showing how Guthlac made his former tormentors carry heavy blocks to help in the construction of Crowland.<sup>273</sup> There is, however, no surviving detail in this scene to indicate construction or more specifically large blocks being carried. It seems more likely that Bolton based his theory on widespread lore and an antiquarian's interpretation than on actual observation.<sup>274</sup>

The other episodes in the quatrefoil are more difficult to decipher in their current state and I concur with Roberts that much energy could be wasted in interpreting these scenes.<sup>275</sup> In brief, Henderson has suggested that the episode to the left of the centre, showing two seated figures, may show either Guthlac's ordination, Becel telling Pega of her brother's death or even

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<sup>270</sup> W. Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum, Centuria 1-11* (London: 1776), p. 31. And David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London: 1953), p. 63.

<sup>271</sup> The Crowland Abbey guide describes this episode as showing Guthlac being taken up to heaven. Clearly this interpretation fails to account for the fact that the bodies in the central episode match in texture to those carrying the saint in the episode below. Gough suggests that this scene shows a dead Guthlac carried by angels with another overhead; Gough, *History and Antiquities*, p. 91. Fig.26.

<sup>272</sup> Medallion 9. Gresley said that he could make out that one figure held a switch in his day; recorded by Hextall, *Croyland Abbey*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>273</sup> W.F. Bolton, "The Croyland Quatrefoil and *Polychronicon*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXI, no. 3-4 (1958). Also Henderson, "Imagery of St Guthlac," p. 87. Stukeley elaborates that this scene once depicted St Guthlac using his flail on demons 'carrying stones from Barnack quarry near Stamford to build his oratory'; Hextall, *Croyland Abbey*, p. 4.

<sup>274</sup> Bolton confesses to have seen the quatrefoil first hand, though he cites Gresley's 1856 observation that one figure appears to be holding a switch (likely the scourge) and that there is a block of stone present. No trace of a block now exists and I wonder if Gresley, and Bolton, did not confuse the second demon's gaping-mouthed head for a block, since it looms directly above the back of the other demon? Another example of a demon carrying stone to aid in construction can be found in County Durham's lore where an unusual pile of stone in 'Gunner's Pool' in the Castle Eden Dene is said to have been dropped from the Devil's apron as he carried stone to assist in the building of Durham Cathedral; Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys* (London: 2005), p. 227.

<sup>275</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," p. 227-8.

the saint advising Æthelbald.<sup>276</sup> On the other side of the centre, we can still make out a dead or dying Guthlac on a platform supported by columns with two unidentifiable attendants.<sup>277</sup> The bottom scene is the most unusual because, though it depicts Guthlac first arriving at Crowland by boat with two others in a scene reminiscent of the fourth Harley medallion, it also shows a nursing sow and four piglets on the shore which was the portent Aeneas interpreted to show where he should found a great city.<sup>278</sup> It is thought that this portion of carving was completed in the mid-thirteenth century due to its delicate fluting and ornate foliage. This is the only narrative relief to have survived at Crowland, though a number of other sculptures still exist.

Surviving on the external western front there are twenty-two statues remaining in their alcoves. Only three and a half are missing from the top tier but the items held by the remainder indicate that this section once held statues depicting eleven apostles. Then in the second tier, on either side of the window, St Bartholomew with his knife and St Guthlac holding a scourge and stepping on a demon are clearly recognizable. An identification of the remaining statues was proposed by the Rev. Stanley Smith, rector of Crowland from 1981-6, and while his suggestions are reasonable, they cannot be confirmed.<sup>279</sup> Nevertheless, a few more general observations may be considered. The statues that occupy the third and fourth tiers hold an equal number of ecclesiastical and secular figures. That half of these figures represent the royalty who served as patrons and founders of the abbey cannot be viewed as anomalous if we consider Crowland's persistent need for patronage and protection from more powerful neighbours. Construction of Crowland's western front was part of the fourth recorded rebuilding since the eleventh century. It was probably begun in the mid-thirteenth century but completed much later though the *Historia Croilandensis* frustratingly records only that during Henry's abbacy 'nearly all the edifices, both within the abbey and without, on its manors, were in his time rebuilt and greatly improved' without mentioning the extent to which these 'edifices' were finished at his death.<sup>280</sup> Indeed, any observer looking upwards at the western portal can still see that there are huge stylistic differences between the designs used above the spring of the arch from those used below and that these differences are not merely confined to the architecture but to the amount of detail in the hair and drapery of the upper two tiers. This contrast indicates that the upper levels were likely completed at a much later date, stretching construction of the fourth abbey into the fourteenth and

<sup>276</sup> Henderson, "Imagery of St Guthlac," pp. 90-2. It was also described as showing a kneeling figure with another sitting behind by Gough, *History and Antiquities*, p. 91 and as showing two females by the shrine by Hextall, *Croyland Abbey*, p. 5. Bolton concurs with Henderson that it shows Guthlac's ordination; Bolton, "The Croyland Quatrefoil and *Polychronicon*," p. 251.

<sup>277</sup> Gough suggests Guthlac is on his deathbed while Stukeley suggests that Guthlac is actually shown on his shrine with figures lamenting; Gough, *History and Antiquities*, p. 91; Hextall, *Croyland Abbey*, p. 5. Bolton considers these two figures to be Pega and Becel; Bolton, "The Croyland Quatrefoil and *Polychronicon*," p. 252.

<sup>278</sup> From the *Aeneid*, VIII, ll. 81-101; Hextall, *Croyland Abbey*, p. 4. Braunton, North Devonshire was similarly founded by St Brannock where he saw a white sow and piglets; Frederick Cameron Sillar and Ruth Mary Meyler, *The Symbolic Pig: An Anthology of Pigs in Literature and Art* (London: 1961), pp. 15-7.

<sup>279</sup> Stanley Swift and R.J. Cooke, "Visitor's Guide to Croyland Abbey: The Abbey Church of Our Lady, St Bartholomew and St Guthlac" (London:2007), pp. 18-9. Fig.24.

<sup>280</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 322.

fifteenth centuries when styles markedly changed.<sup>281</sup> Indeed, the oldest statue to survive at Crowland of a seated king holding a rectangular object is no longer to be found at the abbey at all, but against one wall of Crowland's unusual three-path bridge.<sup>282</sup> Furthermore, while some of the uppermost statuary may have been added as late as the fifteenth century, the kernel of an idea to visually represent episodes from the Guthlac legend in both the quatrefoil and in the larger statue of Guthlac standing on a demon, holding a scourge had their origins in Henry de Longchamp's thirteenth-century revisions of the Guthlac legend.

Nor was Henry's revival of Crowland limited to visual representations, for during his abbacy he also commissioned two new, updated texts on St Guthlac and the relics associated with him. The first text was a Latin epitome by Peter de Blois that compressed Felix's *Life* into twenty five sections by cutting what he considered superfluous material. Guthlac's armament against his foes, mention of witnesses, the construction of an oratory over a barrow, Becel's grief and Guthlac's words of consolation, his final celebration of the Mass, and Becel's discovery of Guthlac helpless in his oratory on the seventh day are all details which are absent from Peter's *vita*.<sup>283</sup> In substitution of this material, Peter's own additions were classified by Bolton as a calendar of Guthlac's earthly life, a description of Æthelbald's gifts and an account of the popularity of Guthlac's shrine as a site for healing.<sup>284</sup> Bolton's subsequent analyses of this text concluded that Peter's commentary did not significantly alter the basic structure or content of his source.<sup>285</sup> And while this text essentially added no previously unknown material to Felix's *vita*, Peter's epitome updated the history of Crowland by appending accounts similar to those found in Orderic's *Abbrevatio* and the *Translatio* and *Miracula* of the Douai MS 852. His purpose must have been to amalgamate the most important aspects of the legend into a single text, while removing any inglorious or contradictory components that still remained in Orderic's epitome. Both Colgrave and Roberts have opined that Peter must have written his epitome at Crowland and there made use of the Douai MS 852 because he includes miracles found only in this collection.<sup>286</sup> Indeed, Peter's account of more recent miracles remains the only complete account of these events to have survived to the present day, since the final folio of the Douai MS has been lost. Peter may have revised Felix's text sometime around the year 1200 at the request of Henry de Longchamp, though certainly after the Douai MS had been made. A letter from a Crowland impersonator of Peter that records '*ad hoc enim urget me vestre postulationis instantia et imperiosa dilectio*', appended to another letter detailing Henry's request, came to form part of

<sup>281</sup> Indeed, the Master Mason William of Wermington's mason marks can be found both on his grave marker, now hung inside the North aisle, and on the West front. He was master mason at Crowland in 1427.

<sup>282</sup> This statue is fairly flat along the back, implying that it was once situated in an elevated alcove. Whether it was an earlier prototype for the statues that now inhabit the west front or from another, earlier renovation cannot be determined. However, the angular cut of the hair, the style of crown and the sparse drapery folds clearly differentiate this statue from those still present on the abbey grounds. Figs. 27-9.

<sup>283</sup> These details can be found in Felix's chapters XXVII-VIII, and L. The only edition of Peter's text is in Appendix III of Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 698-719. Also helpful Bolton, "Thesis," Appendix I, pp. 236-55.

<sup>284</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 25-33.

<sup>285</sup> Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 46.

<sup>286</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 22 and Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 205-6.

this same pseudo-Peter's continuation of Ingulph's *Historia Croilandensis*.<sup>287</sup> However, these letters may not be representative of any factual correspondence between the author and abbot.

Like so many other Crowland-produced materials, Peter of Blois' epitome survives only in a single manuscript, now located in the Trinity College Dublin's collections as B.2.7.<sup>288</sup> Grosjean considers this manuscript to have been copied in the thirteenth century at Westminster and Colgrave has noted that Durham once held a copy, as it was mentioned in a 1395 catalogue though this is now lost.<sup>289</sup> It has also been claimed by Horstmann and Colgrave that Peter's epitome served as the source for John of Tynemouth's version of Guthlac's *Life* in the *Sanctilogium Angliae* which in the sixteenth century was adapted by Wynkyn de Worde as *Nova Legenda Angliae*.<sup>290</sup> Jane Roberts has however compared Peter's and John's epitomes found in Horstmann's edition and determined that John's contains phrases and sentences 'found in *vita* texts but not in Peter's', indicating that either John made his revision directly from the Douai MS as well or that John used 'an earlier and fuller' text by Peter.<sup>291</sup> Peter's *Life of St Guthlac* is of value for it served as the source for a number of later Guthlacian materials, apparently replacing Felix's text as the definitive account, in keeping with the current tastes and interests of Crowland's community.

The second text to have been commissioned during the abbacy of Henry de Longchamp was a Latin poem composed by Henry de Avranches. This 1655 line work composed in free Latin hexameters follows the contents of Peter de Blois' epitome closely, omitting only Peter's calendar of Guthlac's life on earth.<sup>292</sup> It also makes its own contributions to the Guthlac legend by providing an explanation for Guthlac and Pega's lifetime estrangement (a demon in his sister's likeness once tried to tempt him to break his fast) and by relating the miraculous story of Guthlac's Psalter.<sup>293</sup> While the former addition serves to provide an explanation, the latter expands upon an episode known from Felix and Peter, integrating the Psalter into Guthlac's timeline in order to substantiate Crowland's claims.<sup>294</sup> Henry de Avranches' synthesis of both

<sup>287</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 224-9. Peter's letter was brought to Horstmann's attention by Searle and attached to the former's appendix of Peter's revision; Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, pp. 698-9 and n.1.

<sup>288</sup> Roberts draws attention to Bale's descriptions of 2 manuscripts of Peter's epitome, suggesting that Trinity College Dublin MS B.4.3 was the other surviving MS. Roberts, "Inventory," p. 205. Marvin L. Colker, *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*, II vols. (Aldershot: 1991), p.314, n.172.

<sup>289</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 22.

<sup>290</sup> The *Nova Legenda Angliae* came to be associated with the name of John Capgrave after that editor made an alphabetic arrangement in the fifteenth century. Both Peter's and John's epitomes can be found in Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, II, pp. 2-13, 698-727. Horstmann's edition is based upon B.L. MS Cotton Tiberius E 1 with collations from Wynkyn de Worde. Horstmann considers this a St Alban's MS, c.975-1000 though Ker thinks it originated at Tewksbury, Gloucestershire. A good brief summation of the spread and absorption of Peter's text was undertaken by Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 205-7.

<sup>291</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 205-7. Contra Horstmann, ed., *PVG*, II, pp. 1-10.

<sup>292</sup> The scribe of this MS of Henry's epitome has miscounted the lines so that he gives the final count as 1666. Cox has interpreted this numbering to reference to Revelations and the Number of the Beast however, Colgrave and Bolton disagree because the number here is not that number but *one thousand*, six hundred and sixty-six. Instead, this miscalculation has led Bolton to question to more relevantly consider whether this copy of the poem might be missing a section; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 14-7, 26-8 for a discussion of the style and metre of this poem, which rhymes only in ll. 53-6.

<sup>293</sup> *MVG*, II. 439-58, 679-726; *Ibid*, pp. 31-3, 56-7, 66-8.

<sup>294</sup> Henry takes a scene in which a crow steals a document from an unnamed monk and drops it into the marsh and turns it into the tale of Guthlac's own Psalter, stolen by demons and lost underwater for seven years, which is found

Peter's epitome and local tradition strongly suggest that Henry's poem was written after Peter's *vita*, at Crowland.<sup>295</sup>

That Henry de Longchamp commissioned this work can be substantiated by reference not only in the *Historia Croilandensis*, which Searle and Liebermann were hesitant to put forth as evidence, but in a 1237 reference in the *Chronicon Angliae Petriburgense* that Henry de Avranches wrote a metrical *Life of St Guthlac* at abbot Henry's request.<sup>296</sup> Indeed, J.C. Russell who has extensively explored Henry de Avranches' works and his association with Crowland has pinpointed within Henry's compositional output that he probably composed his metrical *Life of St Guthlac* between 1220 and 1227-33; the completion date of his poem on St Hugh and prior to his obligation to compose a metrical *Life of St Oswald* for Abbot Martin of Peterborough, who ruled 1227-33. Russell further concludes that stylistically, Henry's *vita* bears greater similarity to his earlier output, suggesting a compositional dating closer to 1220.<sup>297</sup> It was Russell's analysis which essentially halted disputes concerning Henry de Avranches authorship. These arguments persisted due to the label, written in a sixteenth-century hand at the top of folio 92<sup>v</sup> of the sole surviving manuscript that Guthlac's metrical *life* was written by William of Ramsey.<sup>298</sup> Russell's comparison of Henry de Avranches' works ultimately concluded that the metrical *Life of St Guthlac* exhibited the same opening and ending formulae as other known works by this author.<sup>299</sup>

The metrical *Life of St Guthlac* survives in a single manuscript, Cambridge University Library MS Dd xi 78.<sup>300</sup> Both Roberts and Bolton record the existence of another copy, British Library MS Cotton Vitellius D xiv, which was lost in the Ashburnam house fire though only Roberts considers it possible that the reference to this text in MS Norwich More 906, noted in the eighteenth century, might have meant that Norwich once owned the sole surviving copy.<sup>301</sup> The Cambridge University Library MS Dd xi 78 is considered by Bolton 'an early copy' of Henry's poem, but not a contemporary one due to the fact that this manuscript has been dated between the date of one of its contents, the *Sermo regis* of 1234, and the death of its owner Matthew Paris in 1259.<sup>302</sup> Some of the texts are even written in Matthew's own hand, though not the folios containing Henry's poem. Furthermore, it is clear from both its inscription and the fact that some of its contents are written in Matthew's own hand that this manuscript was made at St Alban's and

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undamaged. The original source is Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, XXXVII, pp. 116-9 though it has already become Guthlac's *cartula* in PVG at 'De cedula quam coruus in harundine dimisit appensam', pp. 708-9.

<sup>295</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 26-33; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 22-4; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 207-8.

<sup>296</sup> Mentioned in Henry's obituary; J.A. Giles, ed., *Chronicon Angliae Petriburgense* (London: 1845), p. 135; citation identified by Josiah Cox Russell and John Paul Heironimus, *The Shorter Latin Poems of Master Henry of Avranches Relating to England*, vol. 1, *Studies and Documents* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1935), pp. 106-7. Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 17-25; Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 207-8.

<sup>297</sup> Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, pp. 105-8; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 22-3.

<sup>298</sup> Russell thinks that this misidentification was written by Leland; Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, pp. 13-5.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8 and Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 22-3.

<sup>300</sup> It occupies 61<sup>r</sup> to 91<sup>r</sup> of 238 folios and is described as a 'small quarto' in Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 5-6.

<sup>301</sup> Roberts' theory is based on Ker's observations that many Norwich manuscripts became Cambridge manuscripts; Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, pp. xv, 165 and Roberts, "Inventory," p. 207. Contra Bolton who concludes that this MS is 'otherwise unknown'; Bolton, "Thesis," p. 10.

<sup>302</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 7, 23.

kept at the abbey.<sup>303</sup> Only Bolton's thesis challenges Russell's dating of Henry's poem by weakly citing a seventeenth-century cataloguist's ascription of the now lost Vitellius MS to 1180 and an unnamed British Library palaeographer's opinion that Photostats of Cambridge University Library MS Dd xi 78 suggest a date in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>304</sup> Bolton's dispute should be disregarded on the basis that his range fails to reconcile both Henry's use of Peter de Blois' epitome and Abbot Henry de Longchamp's dates, though the lack of any primary observations certainly warrant further omission of his disputation.

Abbot Henry de Longchamp's contributions are testified by the many materials, both textual and visual, that revitalized and transformed Guthlac's legend according to Crowland's designs for it. The Harley Roll, the west front sculptures, the relics, and the assimilation of textual variants and local interests under Peter de Blois and Henry de Avranches served to clarify and focus Crowland's vision of St Guthlac's greatness. Without the enthusiasm and energy of this abbot however, Crowland may well have deteriorated into an impoverished, unprotected and dwindling foundation out in the Fens. The developments classed under the Longchamp Revival provide a glimpse into its most successful period and the contributions which enabled it to be so.

In setting out to update the historiography regarding the dating range, suggested origins and provenance of fourteen key Guthlacian materials, there emerge four pronounced stages to its development. The Origins, Vernacular Versions, Norman Developments, and the Longchamp Revival have been chosen as groupings because they define periods where shared concerns or new features are common. Such a classification had not yet been fully realized in respect to this cult and its outline here will facilitate a critical history of this legend's development in the ensuing chapters. It was also necessary to distinguish materials with the most valuable contributions from the extensive catalogues which have been usefully compiled and made widely available over the last hundred years.

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<sup>303</sup> Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 165. A book containing works by Master Henry de Avranches at this abbey is further cited as evidence by Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>304</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 23-4.



## Chapter III

### CROWLAND'S FUNCTION AND ITS BEARING UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ST GUTHLAC'S CULT

When St Guthlac first decided to settle at the site known as Crowland, his hagiographer explains that he did so for two reasons. The first was that he had been influenced by reading tales of the Desert Fathers and '*avida cupidine heremum quaerere fervebat*.'<sup>305</sup> The second reason was that Crowland was part of *illius vastissimi heremi inculta loca* called the Fens; uninhabitable because of demons and known to very few. While the first reason elucidates how hagiographical exemplars could influence their monastic audience,<sup>306</sup> the second may illuminate more widespread perceptions of the fenland landscape. That the Fens served as a kind of physical barrier, may be evidenced by East Anglia's ability to maintain some form of political independence after the Mercian victory over the area in 635.<sup>307</sup> However, this area may also have functioned as a kind of psychological barrier, with the barren landscape becoming the domain of monsters and demons in peoples' imaginations since it supported no human inhabitants.

In *The Audience of Beowulf*, Dorothy Whitelock first drew attention to similarities between Felix's *vita* and *Beowulf* by proposing that resemblances resulted from 'the men of this age, men quite likely to be our poet's contemporaries [thinking] unknown areas, like the Fens, full of monsters and demons.'<sup>308</sup> Whitelock's approach consequently opened the doors for further research into the mindset of these texts' audiences. Thus Guthlac's decision to inhabit Crowland might be reconsidered as based not only on his need for the isolated conditions in which he could battle the invisible hordes but a result of popular identification of the Fens as the place where these hordes rested.<sup>309</sup>

One method for attempting to reconstruct the broader appeal of the Guthlac cult will be to develop our understanding of its cultural landscape by starting with its setting. The location of

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<sup>305</sup> 'his heart was enlightened and burned with an eager desire to make his way to the desert.' VG, XXIV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 87.

<sup>306</sup> Kurtz suggests that the *Life of St Anthony* may have been accessible to the historical Guthlac, studying at Repton, because it was known in England around his time. For evidence of this Kurtz cites Aldhelm who referred to both the Athanasian and Evagrian *vitae* in his *De Laudibus Virginitatis*; Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 106-7, 7n. Also M. Schutt, "Vom Heiligen Antonius Zum Heiligen Guthlac" *Antike und Abendland* 5 (1956) and Wieland, "Aures Lectoris: Orality and Literacy in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*."

<sup>307</sup> First suggested by Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 49.

<sup>308</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, p.76.

<sup>309</sup> Thomas D. Hill presents a good history of the origins of conflict between hermits and demons with respect to the Latin *vita* and *Guthlac A*; Hill, "Drawing the Demon's Sting: A Note on a Traditional Motif in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*." The idea that devils were permitted a respite from their endless wanderings can be found in *Soul & Body I and II* and Blickling Homily 4 although an unspecified period of respite occurs only in *Guthlac A* and *Junius 85*. The idea of the devils' respite originated in the VSP which was especially popular in England; Antonette Di Paolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St Paul* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1978), pp.48-50; T. Silverstein, *The Visio S. Pauli. The History of the Apocalypse in Latin Together with Nine Texts* (London: 1935), pp. 3-12. Also C.D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: 1993), pp. 132-6.

Crowland and the nature of the Fens have been incorporated into visual and textual materials on St Guthlac, making them an integral component of the Guthlac narrative from its earliest origins. However the site itself did not continue to function solely as the isolated fenland hermitage, becoming a cult centre for devotions to the saint and the home of a major Benedictine community, persistently dogged by disputes over surrounding lands and rivers. Under these circumstances, did the location and geography of Crowland influence the nature of the cult which developed at the original site of Guthlac's hermitage? And how were adaptations to the site treated in the legend? This is an important approach which engages the ongoing discussion regarding the role and function of the Anglo-Saxon Church by revealing how a holy site in a sparsely inhabited area of England developed through cultivating a saint's cult. Moreover, any evidence of lay involvement will contribute to a greater understanding of the scope of saints and the role of their churches in society during these periods of intense debate. In order to measure these developments and consider Crowland's ability to persuade the laity to support this church and saint, written and visual sources must be investigated alongside other forms of evidence. It will also be important to justify a focus solely on Crowland by recognizing and disputing other sites' candidacy for cult centre.

### **The historical geography of Crowland**

The historical geography of Crowland is essential for distinguishing who Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* was intended for and what implications location had on the representation of political relationships within the *vita*. The importance of this contextual evidence to not only our understanding of the origins of the cult but also the factors which helped or hindered the prominence of Crowland Abbey in later periods has been underestimated. Historical geography features briefly in Thacker's chapter on Felix's *Life* and Colgrave's edition of this text as both their discussions were limited to Felix's dedication and any textual evidence for its provenance.<sup>310</sup> Similarly, W.F. Bolton's thesis on some of the later traditions apologizes for limiting itself to 'bringing together Guthlaciana' whilst proposing a critical history of the cult which was then never produced.<sup>311</sup> Even Jane Roberts, who has certainly published more on the Guthlac legend than anyone else, oddly concurs with Stenton regarding the Mercian provenance of the early hagiography within articles in which she then emphasizes St Guthlac's distinction from the other Mercian saints who fell into obscurity alongside the demise of their kingdom and cultural identity.<sup>312</sup> It is clearly time to re-examine the historical geography of this cult.

The very site chosen by Guthlac for his hermitage appears to lie in a political middle-ground between the kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia during the late-seventh / early-eighth

<sup>310</sup> Especially Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 1-2, 15-6 and Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 279-83, 324-8.

<sup>311</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," pp. ii, 236.

<sup>312</sup> Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 1 and Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 69, 85-6.

centuries and although Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* is dedicated to an East Anglian king, there are many more favourable mentions within it to the Mercian royal family.<sup>313</sup> These descriptions, provided by Felix, supply the earliest glimpse into the organization, affiliations and promotion of St Guthlac's cult. Moreover, all of the other early materials produced during the vernacular variations phase fail to mention any details about Crowland that would imply there was a monastery at the site. If it can be suggested that this early hagiography was commissioned by and intended for one of these royal families then accordingly one must further question why there is this connection between these two kingdoms within the text itself. This section will begin by exploring the sources that provide insight into the situation between these two kingdoms and will then continue to explore what evidence there is to locate which kingdom the site itself identified with. It will be vital to consider the geographical focus of the cult precisely because there are so many literary variations which appear to pre-date the arrival of a community whose self-interest in promoting Crowland can be duly noted in the later materials.

Where Crowland is situated appears to have once been part of the fenland border area, sparsely inhabited but ultimately separating the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia. This situation was likely sustained until the mid-seventh century when King Penda of Mercia infringed upon this natural border by attacking East Anglia. Nor was this the only kingdom that Penda had designs upon; during his rule, he expanded Mercian territories along the north, east and southern borders of his original kingdom yet the relevance of these campaigns to Felix's *Life of Guthlac* is confined to Bede's account of Penda's attack on East Anglia, as this may help to explain the relationship between the two kingdoms mentioned in Felix.<sup>314</sup>

Bede records that East Anglian King Sigeberht (c. 630-635) and kinsman King Ecgric, a joint or sub-king, were killed and all the East Anglian army were '*caesus sive dispersus exercitus*' in battle against the Mercians.<sup>315</sup> Curiously, Bede follows this blow to the kingdom by simply recording that Anna succeeded to the empty throne, though he too was slain by Penda later on. Due to the paucity of information in Bede, it becomes difficult to determine what outcome the Mercian victory had on either kingdom, although it is likely that the East Anglians suffered defeat at Penda's hands as evidenced by the deaths of their two rulers and the loss of the entire army. Unlike the assumption of Lindsey by Mercia however, East Anglia appears to have been permitted to maintain some form of independence as can be seen by the seemingly straightforward succession of Anna. Stenton posits that it was the difficult terrain of the fenlands which acted as a natural border, keeping Mercia from making East Anglia a province.<sup>316</sup> This is not an unreasonable theory. Nevertheless, some form of subjugation to the Mercian kingdom in the

<sup>313</sup> The underlying assumption here is that the location of the surviving abbey overlies Guthlac's hermitage. I will explore what evidence there is to consider this assumption later on within this chapter.

<sup>314</sup> Battle of Hatfield Chase, II.20; Battle of Maserfelth, III.9; attacking Northumbria, III.16-17; East Anglia, III.18; Colgrave and Mynors, eds., *Bede's HE*. Also Steven Bassett, "In Search of the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms," *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (1989), p. 4.

<sup>315</sup> Trans: 'either slain or scattered'; *HE* III. 18; Colgrave and Mynors, eds., *Bede's HE*, pp. 268-9.

<sup>316</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 49.

form of tribute or military obligation must have applied in its stead. Bede may in fact provide a clue as to the relationship between the two kingdoms following this event: at the battle of Winwæd in 665 Penda was accompanied by thirty royal ealdormen, one of which was Æthelhere, brother and successor to Anna, perhaps denoting that Bede's use of the term *duces regii* was meant to describe the provincial rulers who had been previously conquered by Penda.<sup>317</sup> A situation in which East Anglia was obligated to provide military support for Mercia may explain why Æthelhere and an East Anglian army fought under Penda against the Northumbrians. Moreover, such a relationship in the later seventh century may help to explain why there are so many complimentary references to Mercian king Æthelbald and his *gesiths* in Felix's *Life of Guthlac*; they may reveal that Ælfwald of East Anglia was desperate to maintain a friendly relationship with a kingdom that he was subject to or to whose good favour he was dependent upon, as their neighbour.

Another way of determining the designation of territory in relation to Crowland after Mercia's attacks of the mid-seventh century may be deduced from the document called the Tribal Hidage which survives in an eleventh-century manuscript.<sup>318</sup> The Hidage lists the lands of peoples in and around the Midlands, allocating 30,000 hides of territory to East Anglia and Mercia respectively as the two largest south-Humbrian kingdoms. Based on its contents, Dumville has hypothesized that the Hidage is actually a much older document and one of Mercian origin, created as a tribute list for King Offa, showing the land holdings of his kingdom and its subjects.<sup>319</sup> Brooks has raised issues with this theory based on the fact that Mercia's own land holdings were included in this so-called 'tribute list'. Instead, he suggests that this list might have instead been intended to show a Mercian overlord the land holdings of Mercians and not just the land holdings of the original territorial kingdom of Mercia.<sup>320</sup> Despite the problems in assigning a purpose to the document, it does roughly present a picture of the sizes of each major kingdom and a number of Middle Anglian smaller sub-groups south of the Humber as they were thought to be around the mid-seventh to late-ninth centuries, the time period in which Felix's *vita* provides the only contextual information that we have for the cult-setting at Crowland. The Hidage describes an East Anglia which was the same size as Mercia and whether this denotes the size of the original kingdom or merely the lands conquered by the Mercians, it reveals its author(s)' perception that the two kingdoms were considered equal in size. This designation perhaps shows that despite East Anglia's military defeat, the size of their country, assisted by its unreachable position on the other side of the Fens, allowed it to retain some independence despite its political obligations to Mercia.

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<sup>317</sup> *HE* III.24; *Ibid.*, p. 290n.

<sup>318</sup> David Dumville, "Essex, Middle Anglia and the Expansion of Mercia in the South East Midlands," *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (1989), p. 130; Margaret Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: 1992), pp.79-85.

<sup>319</sup> Dumville, "Expansion in the SE Midlands," p. 129.

<sup>320</sup> Nicholas Brooks, "The Formation of the Mercian Kingdom," *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (1989), p. 160.

This is important because Felix records Guthlac's associations to both East Anglian and Mercian rulers, suggesting that Crowland was located in a border region between the two. Here again, the Tribal Hidage may prove useful as it records the names and sizes of some of the smaller tribal groups distributed in the east and south Midlands. These groups clearly were politically independent at one time, as reflected by their inclusion in the Tribal Hidage, though their size and perilous position between East Anglia and Mercia hints that they were probably absorbed or loosely considered components of neighbouring kingdoms at various points in their history. The peoples listed in the Tribal Hidage who have been conjectured to have inhabited the fenlands are listed as follows, alongside their attributed land holdings: the Bilmingas (600 hides), the Spaldas (600 hides), the Wigesta (900 hides), the North Gyrwe (600 hides), the South Gyrwe (600 hides), East Wixna (300 hides), and the West Wixna (600 hides). There is little known about many of these groups outside of their names, as provided by this list. Furthermore, identifying the geographic areas of these groups proves even more difficult, if not impossible, and current maps speculatively showing the placement of peoples mentioned in the Tribal Hidage sometimes appear contradictory.<sup>321</sup> However, the orientation of these sub-groups can be aided by Bede's identification of these same tribes in the fenlands around Crowland.

Of all the peoples recorded in the Tribal Hidage who inhabited fenland, Bede has confined himself to a few minor mentions of the Gyrwe as the 'nationality' of a few important people rather than as any established, independent sub-kingdom, firmly rooted in the Church. It is more important to our understanding of the setting of St Guthlac's cult to locate the Gyrwe lands over the other groups recorded in the Tribal Hidage precisely because the 11<sup>th</sup> century *Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston* records 'Guðlac's' resting place as 'Cruland' which the list describes as lying 'on middan Girwan fæenne'.<sup>322</sup> This suggests that Crowland was situated in fens named after the tribe which defined the six-hundred-hides territory described in the Tribal Hidage. Yet Riley early considered the name Gyrwe to have been derived from the British *Gyrwys* which means 'drivers of cattle' or even more appropriately, the Saxon *Gyrva*, meaning 'marshlands', so perhaps the geography of the land provided a label for the people.<sup>323</sup> A re-examination of the evidence which may elucidate where these lands lie may contribute to our understanding of fenland geography and Crowland's political orientation between the kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia.

Bede only references the Gyrwe three times in his *Historia*. The first time he records that one Thomas, who became a bishop of the East Angles around 640, came from this tribe.<sup>324</sup> Later

<sup>321</sup> Compare Tribal Hidage maps in David Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: 1981), pp. 76-7 and Cyril Hart, "The Kingdom of Mercia," *Mercian Studies* (1977), pp. 50-1. Note especially the placement of the Spaldas in the two. Figs. 38.

<sup>322</sup> From the Cambridge Corpus Christi College 201 MS. The other extant copy of this document survives in London British Library Stowe 944, 34v-39r. This latter version records 'on middan Gyrwan fenne'. As referenced by Rollason, "Lists of Resting-Places," pp. 89, 149-51.

<sup>323</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 50, n.53.

<sup>324</sup> *HE* III.20.

he claims that Seaxwulf founded the monastery of Medeshamstede in the lands of the Gyrwe after the Mercian bishop Winfrith had been deposed.<sup>325</sup> These two brief references to ecclesiastical developments within Gyrwe lands are enigmatic as there is no mention of either where Thomas received his learning or intriguingly, much other information about the great mother house at Peterborough, outside of an attribution to it being generally founded in the time before Seaxwulf was consecrated to the Mercian bishopric.<sup>326</sup> Such neglect merely signals Bede's focus, showing that the Gyrwe were really only minor players to someone of Northumbrian ecclesiastical interests.

The third mention of the Gyrwe in the *Historia* may actually serve to give some insight into their status in relation to the larger Mercian and East Anglian kingdoms that bordered them; Bede records that the first marriage of Princess Æthelthryth of the East Angles was to Tondberht, an ealdorman (*princeps*) of the South Gyrwe.<sup>327</sup> Stenton has suggested, on the basis of Tondberht's title, that the Gyrwe may have had enough independence from East Anglia to have had a separate ealdorman.<sup>328</sup> This seems likely as a marriage between a member of the East Anglian royal house and the ealdorman of a neighbouring tribe must have been designed to solidify an alliance between the two, particularly where they might have shared borders. Certainly, Æthelthryth's second marriage to King Ecgrith of Northumbria assured a more prominent alliance than her first. However, such a union does not indicate whether the Gyrwe were subject peoples to the East Anglians before this event or even after it.

The most valuable detail to be gleaned from this brief reference to Æthelthryth and Tondberht's marriage is her connection to Ely, as this may help to locate the Gyrwe lands. After leaving her second marriage in favour of a religious life, Æthelthryth set up a monastery at Ely with herself as abbess. Bede explains that she chose Ely for her monastery because 'she sprang from the race of the East Angles.'<sup>329</sup> Furthermore, Bede describes Ely as a district consisting of about 600 hides *in provincia Orientalium Anglorum*, which happens to be the same amount of hides assigned the South Gyrwe, who her first husband Tondberht was ealdorman of, in the Tribal Hidage list. On the basis of this evidence, Colgrave suggests that 'it is possible that the land of the South Gyrwe is to be identified with the Isle of Ely.'<sup>330</sup> Statements to this effect in the *Liber Eliensis* confirm that the abbey was considered to have been situated in South Gyrwe lands by its twelfth-century author.<sup>331</sup> It would therefore be logical to propose that the North Gyrwe

<sup>325</sup> HE IV.6.

<sup>326</sup> Sir Frank Merry Stenton, "Medeshamstede and Its Colonies," *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: The collected papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (1970).

<sup>327</sup> HE IV.19.

<sup>328</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 50.

<sup>329</sup> 'Ubi monasterium habere desideravit memorata Christi famula, quoniam de provincia eorundem Orientalium Anglorum ipsa, ut praefati sumus, carnis originem duxerat.' HE, IV.19; Colgrave and Mynors, eds., *Bede's HE*, p. 276n.

<sup>330</sup> HE IV.19; *Ibid*, pp. 396-7.

<sup>331</sup> Fairweather, ed., *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*, Book I, preface, pp. 3-5.

were so called because their lands lie to the north of South Gyrwe, possibly encompassing Medeshamstede and 'Cruland'.

In addition, the admittedly late *Historia Croylandensis* refers to the ravaging of Ely and the country of the 'Girwii' by King Beorred of Mercia in 871.<sup>332</sup> This source helpfully identifies the Gyrwe country as the area between Stamford, Huntingdon and Wisbech, an area which the pseudo-Ingulph states had belonged to Medehamstede abbey before the Mercian army took it. It would be a simple stretch of reasoning to include Crowland within Gyrwe boundaries because it is situated between Stamford and Huntingdon, but the *Historia Croylandensis* also includes a charter of Edgar which forbids those from the country of the 'Girvii' from entering into the 'limits of the marshes of Croyland'.<sup>333</sup> Consequently it would be more reasonable to assume that Gyrwe lands had long since been divided up and forgotten about by ecclesiastical and royal interests by the time the pseudo-Ingulph was writing. Nevertheless, this source does indicate that the later abbey at Crowland was intent on maintaining boundaries separate from the Gyrwe whose lands the early hermitage appears to have been located in.

What the exact relationship was between the Gyrwe and the East Anglians cannot be determined exclusively from either the Tribal Hidage or Bede's *Historia* although these sources do display the tantalizing possibility that a marital union could have brought the South Gyrwe at least into an East Anglian alliance. The contextual evidence which can be found for the relationships between East Anglia, Mercia and the tribal sub-groups like the Gyrwe imply that they were still vulnerable to Mercian military might, despite the isolation of their landscape. Indeed, East Anglia's interest in an alliance with the South Gyrwe could have been the motive behind their offer of a royal bride. Yet this same evidence falls short of explaining Crowland's orientation beyond an indisputable early association with the Gyrwe tribe and their fenland locality.

Part of the reason that this is the case is that there are hardly any authentic documents to bear witness to the early history of hermitage or monastery on site at Crowland. The fires of 1091 and 1171 in conjunction with the great earthquake of 1118 ensured that if there was any early documented history of the site, it was lost.<sup>334</sup> In particular, the pseudo-Ingulph despondently explains firsthand the destruction that the 1091 fire wrought in the muniment room alone: 'Our charters...were all destroyed. The privileges, also, granted by the kings of the Mercians, documents of extreme antiquity...written in Saxon characters, were all burnt. The whole of these muniments of ours, both great and small, nearly four hundred in number, were in one moment of a night, which proved to us of blackest hue, by a most shocking misfortune, lost and utterly destroyed.'<sup>335</sup> Such a heart-rending description of the loss of these beloved documents makes

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<sup>332</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>333</sup> Charter of Edgar c.966 in the *Historia Croilandensis* says that it reconfirms Eadred's donations; *Ibid*, pp. 87, 167.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 197-208, 268, 273-4.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid*, p. 201.

the appending statement that 'several charters' had survived the fire because the narrator had luckily removed those years before and left them in the cloister implausible. Statements like these have called into question the authenticity of Crowland's history and its ancient claims.

Despite this, the *Historia Croylandensis* remains our only source for information about the foundation of the monastery.<sup>336</sup> If we follow Riley and consider its importance as 'the vehicle' by which Crowland monks could refurbish Ingulph's original history with fictitious charters, thereby supplying proof of disputed lands, then it still has some value.<sup>337</sup> Moreover, if we continue to utilize the *Historia Croylandensis* with this approach in mind, then comparative analysis of the other remaining evidence will suggest at least a partial picture of what lands, and affiliations, Crowland might have desired or actually possessed in pre-Conquest times. The early function of the abbey is as vital to our understanding of the historical geography of the site, as was defining Crowland's geographical and political identifications, precisely because a monastery would have been dependent upon the protection and patronage of royalty. The crux of this issue is that Crowland's location was poised to have been controlled by either East Anglia or Mercia thus we must turn to Crowland's sources in order to elucidate its patrons.

The surviving charters, all of which have been found to be of spurious date, assert that a monastery was founded on the island of Crowland in 716 by Æthelbald of Mercia.<sup>338</sup> There even survives a pictorial representation of this version on the eighteenth medallion of the Harley roll, depicting Æthelbald placing a scroll recording his donation on Guthlac's shrine.<sup>339</sup> By the early twelfth century this story had become the definitive version that Crowland had ascribed to, for when Orderic Vitalis was commissioned to compose an *Abbrevatio* of Felix's *vita* and the early history of the abbey, he emphasizes a continuity to the site by stating that '*nec unquam post primam instaurationem quam idem rex fecit, sedes Crulandiæ religiosorum habitatione monachorum usque in hodiernum diem caruit*'.<sup>340</sup> Thus Orderic Vitalis' *Abbrevatio* becomes the earliest authentic account of Crowland as an ancient Mercian royal foundation. As such, the *Abbrevatio* could then provide Crowland monks in later years with a passage that they could attach to Felix's *vita* in order to include the foundation of their house.<sup>341</sup> MS Douai 852, produced in thirteenth-century Crowland's scriptorium, follows this order as do Peter de Blois and Henry de

<sup>336</sup> Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG;" Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature;" Roberts, "Inventory," p. 213 citing Felix Liebermann, *Quadripartitus* (Halle: 1892), pp. 255-67 and Searle, *Historia Croylandensis*, p. 209.

<sup>337</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. ix-xv.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-5. The charter that relates Æthelbald of Mercia's foundation of a monastery at Crowland, Lincolnshire, survives with the date 716 in the following manuscripts: B.M. Arundel 178, fos. 29v-30; B.M. Lansdowne 207 c, fos. 96v-99; P.R.O., Conf. R. 1 Hen. VIII, pt 2, no. 7; P.R.O. Pat. R. 17 Ric. II, pt 1, m. 31, P.R.O. Pat R. 1 Hen. IV, pt 2, m.8; Oxford, All Souls college, 32, fos 1-2; as referenced by P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Its Bibliography*, vol. 8, *Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks* (London: 1968). It is still referred to as an island in the eastern coast of Mercia by Roger of Wendover; J.A. Giles, ed., *Roger of Wendover's Flowers of History*, II vols., vol. I (London: 1849), pp. 131-4.

<sup>339</sup> Roundel 18; Warner, *The Harley Roll*, pp. 15-6. See fig.18.

<sup>340</sup> '...and from the day of its first foundation by the king to the present the island of Crowland has never been without holy monks.' Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, books III & IV, pp. 340-1, n.1. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>341</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 7.



Avranches' later epitomes.<sup>342</sup> The fabrication and continuation of Crowland's foundation legend clearly demonstrates how desperate the post-Conquest community was to claim an ancient and uninterrupted history which stretched back to Guthlac's and, just as importantly, Æthelbald's time. There is no indication in these sources that East Anglia had ever figured in promoting St Guthlac's cult at Crowland.

Unfortunately for the monks, there is very little conclusive evidence that their version of Crowland's foundation was in any way correct. Indeed, there is much to suggest that a monastery was not founded at Crowland before 946, when Orderic tells us that Thurketyl was appointed abbot by King Eadred. There is no mention in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* of when Crowland was founded, outside of the Peterborough Manuscript's claim that its lands belonged to Peterborough, as given by Edgar in 972.<sup>343</sup> Harold later re-confirmed the gift of Crowland to Peterborough in 1066.<sup>344</sup> Even Orderic Vitalis' account, which was used in later centuries as the definitive version of the foundation legend, does not name any abbots prior to Thurketyl with the exception of a certain Kenulph; a name to which Orderic could only vaguely ascribe *magnæ famæ* and a solitary boundary stone along the Deeping-Crowland border.<sup>345</sup> Moreover, Peter de Blois, writing even later than Ordericus, neither confirms his chronology nor attempts a more complete one, implying that such efforts were best left alone.

The *Historia Croylandensis* on the other hand, insists that there was a thriving convent and church in place in 716 which shared the island with Guthlac's oratory and four other separate hermitages that were inhabited by the saint's lifetime familiars, Becel, Cissa, Ecgbert, and Tatwine.<sup>346</sup> Guthlac's sister Pega also appears to have lived in a cottage on-site, though it is unclear where exactly, until a year after her brother's death when she returned to her own cell 'which lay to the west, at a distance of four leagues from the oratory of her said brother.'<sup>347</sup> The pseudo-Ingulph explains that this arrangement of abbey and hermitages flourished not only under abbot Kenulph (c. 716-89) but under later abbots (who went unnamed by Orderic Vitalis) Patrick (c. 790-819), Siward (c. 820-49), and Theodore (c. 850-69) until the Danish army decimated much of the community and murdered its abbot.<sup>348</sup> The community never fully recovered from these attacks before taxation and the loss of estates to secular authorities forced abbot Godric (c. 870-946) to disperse the small number that remained. By the 940s, only five monks remained to

<sup>342</sup> PVG, pp. 718-9 and MVG, ll. 616-55, pp. 104-6. Also Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG."

<sup>343</sup> 963 A.D. Peterborough MS only; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London: 2000), p. 115.

<sup>344</sup> 1066 A.D. Peterborough MS only; *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>345</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 340-1; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. xii-xiii; Searle, *Historia Croylandensis*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>346</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 9. Also Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia c.650-1200* (Woodbridge: 2004), pp. 150-1.

<sup>347</sup> Since Orderic Vitalis and the pseudo-Ingulph, Pega's hermitage has been thought to have been at Peakirk, now in Northamptonshire. Also Prior, "Fact and/or Folklore? The Case for St Pega of Peakirk," pp. 10-3. Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 9 and Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 342-5.

<sup>348</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 8, 12, 35, 40-48. Compare the account of the Danish attacks with that recorded by Orderic, who does not relay any of the abbey's personal losses; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 340-1.

care for the relics and ruins and this number decreased to three after that abbot's death in 946.<sup>349</sup> The legend then follows that Thurketyl, Eadred's counsellor, became so taken with the dedication and hospitality of the three surviving monks when he visited that he pledged to return, repopulate the community to 100 monks and reinvigorate widespread interest in St Guthlac.<sup>350</sup> Both the pseudo-Ingulph and Orderic Vitalis portray Thurketyl as the first abbot who developed Crowland into an abbey worthy of its illustrious beginnings by gaining royal support for its re-construction, defining its boundaries, and by recovering secularly appropriated estates.

However, it may be that the pseudo-Ingulph's statement that after the Danish attack Crowland was maintained as a small cell in which a few monks cared for the shrine, was actually the situation not only after the Invasion, but before it as well, as Searle has hypothesized.<sup>351</sup> This was certainly the sequence at nearby Thorney or *Ancarig*, and Peakirk, later a dependency of Crowland, which both served as hermitages until converted into abbeys by Benedictine monks in the tenth century.<sup>352</sup> Moreover, Tim Pestell's study of East Anglian monastic foundations has shown, on the basis of physical rather than documentary evidence, that this pattern was rather prevalent in this region. He argues that many East Anglian Benedictine foundations grew out of priestly communities and existing holy sites whose isolated locations and familial bonds enabled them to weather the Viking attacks.<sup>353</sup> Conceivably the *Historia Croylandensis* and the forged charters it contains from pre-Benedictine times were precautionary measures designed to authenticate land claims that were so often in dispute with its neighbours in the post-Conquest period. There is much within the *Historia Croylandensis* to show that this was certainly the case as there are so many documented rows between Crowland and tenants at Deeping, Whaplode, Spalding and Holland.<sup>354</sup> Most of these disputes were with settlements that coincidentally appear as gifts to Crowland, with the exception of Holland, in a forged charter of King Wiglaf of Mercia dated 833.<sup>355</sup>

In addition, it has already been noted that the admittedly larger house at Peterborough claimed ownership of Crowland with charters from Kings Edgar and Harold even though the *Historia Croylandensis* attests Edgar's assurances of a set boundary at the river Nene as far to

<sup>349</sup> The five were Clarenbald, Swartting, Turgar (who as a child had been taken captive during the Viking massacre at Crowland), Brune and Aio. The last two left for Winchester, then Malmesbury after Godric's death; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 59.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, pp. 60-72; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 340-3.

<sup>351</sup> Searle, *Historia Croylandensis*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>352</sup> Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*, pp. 73, 78. There is an authentic charter recording the grant of Peakirk's land by Edmund to New Minster, Winchester in 947; S 947.

<sup>353</sup> Tim Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia c.650-1200* (Woodbridge: 2004), pp. 216-7.

<sup>354</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 193, 276, 278, 343-5, 351, 396-7, 440, 493; H.C. Darby, *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge: 1940), pp. 86-92.

<sup>355</sup> 833 AD Wiglaf, King of Mercia, to Siward, abbot of Crowland and the abbey of Crowland (confirmation and grant of privileges and of land at Bucknall, Hallington, Gernthorp, Langtoft, Deeping, Baston, Rippingale, Lincs.; Sutton, Stapleton, Leics.; Badby, Northants.; Holbeach, Whaplode, Spalding, Drayton, Lincs.; Glapthorn, Peakirk, Northants.; Laythorpe, Kirkby, Lincs.; Standon, Herts.; Addinton, Northants. Latin. B.L. Arundel 178, fos. 31v-32v; B.L. Lansdowne 207 c, fos. 101v-7; Oxford All Souls College, 32, fos. 2-4; S 189.

the south 'as the king's lands at Medehamstede' with a contradictory charter of their own.<sup>356</sup> This boundary may have always been a little too close for comfort; Crowland's three-road bridge used to straddle the confluence of the Nene and Welland rivers with 'each base in a different county' and it is only a couple hundred metres from Crowland's west front.<sup>357</sup> However, the early relationship between the two, testified by the pseudo-Ingulph's account of Crowland monks coming to bury those Medehamstede monks who were massacred in the 870 Viking attacks is otherwise portrayed as amicable.<sup>358</sup> The only exception arising once we chronologically reach the Anonymous continuations for the year 1202, when abbot Acharius of St Peter's claimed ownership of Crowland's southern marsh at Alderland.<sup>359</sup> If we instead remind ourselves that the *Historia Croylandensis* was a late creation, perhaps compiled after St Peter's had trespassed upon Crowland's boundaries, then the reasoning behind creating a history which not only reminds Peterborough of its past indebtedness but reinforces Crowland's own fictitious ancient claims becomes evident.

Crowland was not as accessible as Peterborough with its infrastructure of Roman road, river and canal yet one thing it did have was the legend that St Guthlac had reclaimed this land for his hermitage and been interred there ever since. Crowland's claims of a monastery as old as Guthlac's hermitage might have been its riposte to very real concerns of drifting into obscurity and isolation or the threat of amalgamation with Peterborough. Furthermore, any suggestion that Crowland was merely a hermitage until the tenth century would have made it difficult to substantiate the ownership of lands and estates which supplied the abbey's much coveted revenue in later centuries. Accordingly, the Domesday survey remains an authentic and impartial source for determining Crowland's land holdings and even then, it regretfully cannot provide a detailed picture of the abbey's pre-Conquest claims of ownership, testified by the forged charters and legend in the *Historia Croilandensis*.

Crowland Abbey itself was not recorded in the Domesday survey although it was registered as the landholder of Holbeach, Whaplode, Spalding, Langtoft, Baston, Dowdyke, Drayton, Algar, Burtoft, and Bucknall.<sup>360</sup> In looking at claims to early ownership of Crowland properties, the following Domesday properties simultaneously turn up in both forged charters and the *Historia Croylandensis*: Holbecke (Holbeach),<sup>361</sup> Wodelade (Whaplode),<sup>362</sup> Spaldelyng

<sup>356</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 84-88.

<sup>357</sup> Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum, Centuria 1-11*, p. 34.

<sup>358</sup> Crowland's abbot Godric, some of his monks and some from Thorney travelled to Medehamstede in order to bury the abbot, monks and townspeople that had all been murdered. The pseudo-Ingulph also mentions how the abbot set up a cross and pyramid as monuments to remind those passing through to offer prayers for those who died, frequently returning to camp at the site and personally offer his own prayers; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., p. 311.

<sup>360</sup> S. Wood, *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England or Liber De Wintonia, Compiled by Direction of King William I*, ed. P. Morgan and C. Thorn, vol. 31: Lincolnshire (Chichester: 1986), p. 346.

<sup>361</sup> Wiglaf AD 833 (S 189), Bertulph AD 851 (S 200) and a lay charter of 810 (S 1189). The charter in the *Historia* claims that Holbecke was actually given by earl Algar, confirmed by King Wiglaf and then re-confirmed by King Bertulph; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 20.

<sup>362</sup> Wiglaf AD 833 (S189), Bertulph AD 851 (S 200), Bergred AD 868 (S 213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741); Ibid, pp. 18, 26, 38, 86.

(Spalding),<sup>363</sup> Langtoft,<sup>364</sup> Baston,<sup>365</sup> Dowdike,<sup>366</sup> Drayton,<sup>367</sup> Algar(kirk),<sup>368</sup> Burtoft,<sup>369</sup> and Bukenhale (Bucknall).<sup>370</sup> Further to this, three of the places mentioned in the Domesday survey appear in the eighteenth roundel of the Harley Roll; Algar, son of the earl of Mercia and former earl of East Anglia's gift of Spalding and Algarkirk and knight Fregeſt's gift of Langtoft.<sup>371</sup> Many other properties are listed in this roundel, in forged charters, and within the *Historia Croylandensis*, although the majority of these were not registered by the Domesday survey as lands belonging to Crowland, making any attributions of pre-Conquest ownership extremely difficult to verify. Nevertheless, most of these lands were clearly considered part of the later abbey's precinct for they were still included in the yearly walk, recorded in 1783, which a minister and group of boys would take around Crowland's boundaries. Gough records that this procession would stop at the market cross at Spalding, St Guthlac's church at Brotherhouse, St Nicholas' stone at the Spalding boundary (now at Whitehouse), the cross in the flags near *Oggot Wodelode grayne*, and St Nicholas' cross in Pinchbeck to sing part of a psalm and pass on the knowledge to young generations that Crowland's boundaries encompassed lands between Spalding and Crowland in the east to Kesteven in the West.<sup>372</sup> Like the abbey's foundation legend and later traditions of walking the boundaries, advertising claims to these lands must have served to validate Crowland's ownership in light of competition with Peterborough and the infringement of secular authorities and nearby settlements.

The only certitude offered by comparative analysis is that Crowland Abbey's exclusion from the Domesday survey is itself indicative of the community's stature by 1086.<sup>373</sup> Conversely, the latest possible date for Crowland's foundation has been put forth by H.E. Hallam as 970 A.D., when the community received Dowdyke Grange near Bicker Haven.<sup>374</sup> It appears that the land

<sup>363</sup> The Spalding lands in dispute were a manor and lands provided by both earl Algar and sheriff Thorold of Lincoln; Bertulph AD 851 (S 200), Bergred AD 868 (S213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741) and lay charters of AD 810 (S 1189), 825 (S 1191), 829 (S 1192), 1051 (S 1230). Also *Ibid*, pp. 13, 20, 26, 37, 68, 131. Crowland's cell and lands at Spalding were disputed, until harassment forced the diminished community to abandon their long-held property in 1074; pp. 170, 172, 193.

<sup>364</sup> Coenwulf AD 806 (S 162), Wiglaf AD 833 (S 189), Bertulph AD 851 (S 200), Bergred AD 868 (S 213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741) and lay charter for AD 819 (S 1190). *Ibid*, pp. 13, 20, 28, 39, 69.

<sup>365</sup> Coenwulf AD 806 (S 162), Wiglaf AD 833 (S 189), Bertulph AD 851 (S 200), Bergred AD 868 (S 213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741) and lay charter for AD 825(S 1191). Baston appears to have first been the gift of 'Northland' from earl Algar, son of Northlang; *Ibid*, pp. 13, 20, 28, 38, 69.

<sup>366</sup> Edgar AD 966 (S 741), and lay charter for AD 810 (S 1189). *Ibid*, p. 69.

<sup>367</sup> Bertulph AD 851 (S 200), Bergred AD 868 (S 213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741) and lay charter for AD 810 (S 1189).

Drayton appears as the gift of the knight Oswy, reconfirmed by kings; *Ibid*, pp. 29, 37, 69.

<sup>368</sup> Bertulph AD 851 (S 200), Bergred AD 868 (S 213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741) and lay charter for AD 810 (S 1189). Algar is obviously the gift of earl Algar, reconfirmed by subsequent kings; *Ibid*, pp. 20, 29, 37, 69.

<sup>369</sup> Edgar AD 966 (S 741) and lay charter for AD 810 (S 1189). Only appears in *Ibid*, p. 69.

<sup>370</sup> Coenwulf AD 806 (S162), Wiglaf AD 833 (S189), Bergred AD 868 (S 213), Edgar AD 966 (S 741). Bukenhale appears as the gift of Thorold, sheriff of Lincoln, confirmed by subsequent kings; *Ibid*, pp. 19, 30, 38, 69, 131.

<sup>371</sup> Warner, *The Harley Roll*, p.15 and fig. 18.

<sup>372</sup> All of these boundary stones were recorded to be different shapes and sizes, all with different inscriptions which Gough rightly recognizes as evidence of re-cutting and repurposing; Gough, *History and Antiquities*, p. xiv-v. Also on the tradition of boundary walking; Angus Winchester, *Discovering Parish Boundaries*, 2nd ed. (Princes Risborough: 2000), pp. 38-54. Fig. 23, 41.

<sup>373</sup> P.P. Hayes and T.W. Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," *East Anglian Archaeology* 5, no. 55 (1992), especially p. 202.

<sup>374</sup> H.E. Hallam, *Settlement and Society: A Study of the Early Agrarian History of South Lincolnshire* (Cambridge: 1965), pp. 42, 165.

disputes documented in Crowland's own history provided the impetus for re-documenting or more likely, fabricating an ancient foundation legend and land donations where no evidence had either survived or existed in the first place. Moreover, these sources serve to develop our knowledge of Crowland's actual boundaries in Norman times alongside the important fact that the abbey had a dogged interest in preserving local lay donations and advertising Mercian royal benefactions that it testifies were made before it became a Benedictine house. It is even possible that Æthelbald was almost as prominent a subject in the sculptural representations at Crowland as Guthlac; for he is probably one of the figures shown beside either Guthlac or Bartholomew on the west front and another alcove statue bearing crown and orb survives after being moved to Crowland's unusual bridge. Comparison to the Harley designs also recommends that Æthelbald was the now-headless figure in at least one (maybe two) of the five episodes depicted in the west front quatrefoil. This in itself is important to our understanding of the appeal of St Guthlac. Yet the point at hand is that there is no convincing evidence in the varied Anglo-Saxon, or even Crowland's post-Norman, sources to show beyond a doubt that Crowland was anything other than a well-known holy site, long cared for by a few monks, prior to Thurketyl's arrival in the mid-tenth century.

This leaves Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* as the only surviving source for information about Crowland both during Guthlac's lifetime but also directly afterwards, when the site was first elevated as a shrine. The vernacular variations of Guthlac's cult, which chronologically followed, contribute little to our understanding of Crowland's development because they were simply not concerned with it. The only exception perhaps being the *B* poet's solitary reference to Guthlac's oratory as '*eadges yrfestol*', which S.A.J. Bradley has taken to mean 'the blessed man's hereditary seat'.<sup>375</sup> Yet it would be unwise to interpret the significance of this phrase when it occurs only sixty lines before the now abrupt end of this poem. Even Felix was vague in his descriptions of Crowland and comparisons to later sources only serve to muddle our understanding of how Guthlac and his successors used the site. It is therefore important to reconsider what Felix tells us about Crowland in relation to relevant geological and archaeological assessments of the site.

In taking for granted that the present-day abbey occupies the same general site where Guthlac first settled, let us next explore the known factors regarding its location. The description in Felix's *vita* of Crowland as '*aliam insulam in abditis remotioris heremi partibus*' seems verified by the further identification of its Midland location in the great marsh which stretches from the river Granta north to the sea.<sup>376</sup> It is always described in both Felix and his anonymous translator as an island set apart in an already forbidding landscape as uninhabitable due to '*menigfealdum*

<sup>375</sup> GB, ll. 1319a; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 122; Glossary: '*yrfestol*', p. 228; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 282. The value of the vernacular variations lies in their characterization of the saint and in their depiction of the fenland landscape, which will be discussed later on within this chapter.

<sup>376</sup> 'a certain island in the more remote and hidden parts of that desert...' VG, XXIII, XXV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 86-89.

*brogum and egsum, and for annysse þæs widgillan westenes.*<sup>377</sup> That it was surrounded by marshes is implied by descriptions of the Fens as '*crebris insularum nemrumque intervenientibus flexuosis rivigarum anfractibus*' and through frequent references to boat travel and a landing place where they could dock.<sup>378</sup> Furthermore, descriptions provided by Felix and his translator appear to be supported by the geological assessments of H.E. Hallam, H.C. Darby and others that Crowland was a peninsular promontory jutting into the peat and silt based marshlands that once paralleled the medieval shoreline of the Wash.<sup>379</sup> Hayes and Lane summarized the topography of Crowland for *The Fenland project*, vol. 5 as a peninsular terrace of gravel off the Welland river, 'higher and wider at its eastern terminal, giving rise to the notion of Crowland as an "island"'.<sup>380</sup> They add that Crowland's peninsula attaches to the fenland 7km to the west at Peakirk, whose settlement developed along the gravel margin of fenland at the edge of Medehamstede's late seventh-century territory. Nineteenth-century archaeological assessments had already concluded the same alignment.<sup>381</sup> Important topographical considerations thus may have factored into the importance of the connection between Peakirk and Crowland, which A.L. Prior has recently argued was based 'on the grounds that Pega was Guthlac's sister and deemed to be his subordinate'.<sup>382</sup> Moreover such a formation imitates the ascetic island retreat exemplified by sites like Skellig Michael and bears close resemblance to the topography of Lindisfarne.<sup>383</sup> There is a strong likelihood that Guthlac settled on the highest elevation of the peninsula in order to make use of a distinct and monastically appealing geography. In the brilliant conclusion of Hayes and Lane; 'Guthlac's island was more than just an ordinary retreat of dry land within the deep Fens; it was a place of prehistoric ritual and burial symbolised by the imposing mounds. Doubtless it created an atmosphere of mystery and wonder conducive to the holy man's self-interrogation, spiritual contemplation and religious worship.'<sup>384</sup>

The geologic shape of Crowland 'island', curled into a bend of the river Welland, may also have influenced its etymology. Orderic Vitalis explained that the name *Crulandia* naturally

<sup>377</sup> 'manifold horrors and fears, and the loneliness of the wide wilderness...'; *OEVG*, III; Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*, pp. 20-1.

<sup>378</sup> *VG*, XXV, XXXVII, XL, XLI, L, LIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 88-9, 118-9, 124-5, 130-1, 158-9, 168-9.

<sup>379</sup> Hallam, *Settlement and Society: A Study of the Early Agrarian History of South Lincolnshire*, p. 35; Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 12; Darby, *The Medieval Fenland*, p. 17; Hayes and Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," p. 192, figs. 118, 119. Fig. 35-7.

<sup>380</sup> Hayes and Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," p. 192. The peninsula's genesis at Peakirk was first noted in the 19<sup>th</sup> c by A.S. Canham, "Notes on the Archaeology of Crowland," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* XLVII (1891), pp. 286-300.

<sup>381</sup> Canham, "Archaeology of Crowland," p. 287: Crowland was 'an island of 300m substratum of gravel formed a narrow isthmus which joined it to Peakirk.'

<sup>382</sup> Prior, "Fact and/or Folklore? The Case for St Pega of Peakirk," p. 16.

<sup>383</sup> Sarah Foot has shown in her book that such factors were more common than has been previously considered, with sites bearing pre-historic hillforts, Roman enclosures and significant topography often being chosen for the location of minsters; *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), pp. 47, 97. Also Michael Herity, "Early Irish Hermitages in the Light of the *Lives* of St Cuthbert," in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to Ad 1200*, ed. Gerald Bonner, David Rollason, and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: 1989); Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives*, pp. 325-6; Audrey L. Meaney, "Felix's Life of Guthlac: Hagiography and/or Truth?," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquities Society* 90 (2001), pp. 31-2.

<sup>384</sup> Hayes and Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," p. 197.

denotes *crudam terram*.<sup>385</sup> Nonetheless the earlier variations which appear in manuscripts of Felix's *Life*; *Crugland*, *Cruwlond*, *Crouland*, *Cruland* and *Cruyland*, use what Colgrave refers to as 'an otherwise unknown' first syllable.<sup>386</sup> Ekwall suggests that the first element, *cruw* or *crug*, might be a derivative of the Norwegian *kryl* which means 'a hump', although he then adds that 'presumably' the word meant 'a bend', referring to its location at a bend in the Welland.<sup>387</sup> In addition, while Margaret Gelling offers no suggestions for the first element of the name, she does consider the second element *land* likely to refer to reclaimed coastal or river marsh, as in Snodland, Kent and Yealand, Lincolnshire - a suggestion which might contrast with Felix's description of Crowland as '*inculta*'.<sup>388</sup> Therefore, Ekwall's suggestion of 'a hump' rather than 'a bend' may in fact be the most suitable as it may be reflective of Felix's description of Guthlac's first dwelling as a '*tumulus agrestibus glaebis coacervatus*'.<sup>389</sup> Indeed, the prevalence of the Welsh *cruc/crug*, the Old Cornish *cruc*, and the British *crouco/crugo* in place-names denoting a hill, barrow or mound may have correspondingly influenced the naming of Crowland, since the significance of its landscape can be noted by Felix's descriptions.<sup>390</sup> The name Crowland must have originated from local knowledge of its particular landscape.

Felix records that Crowland was revealed to Guthlac by the people who lived closest to it although this description fails to clarify Crowland's location in relation to the nearby settlements where these people may have lived.<sup>391</sup> Was Crowland actually in the *vastissimi heremi* that Felix describes, or was this merely hagiographical convention?<sup>392</sup> At this time, the majority of settlements in the Fens appear to have been confined to the silt border of the Wash and to inland peat 'islands' of a substantial size with the capacity for fulfilling industrial and transport requirements.<sup>393</sup> Tim Pestell's study of the settlements of the marshlands of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire argues that they remained small and sparse, situated near the monastic holdings which are in evidence today though he also concluded that there was 'no evidence at Crowland' for Roman, early or middle Anglo-Saxon finds.<sup>394</sup> In addition, mapping the settlements near to Crowland reveal two parallel patterns of settlements which were separate from its promontory: one line along the medieval shoreline and its coastal estuaries, the other in a band along the Nene valley.<sup>395</sup> The nearest major settlements to Crowland might therefore have been Spalding

<sup>385</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 338-9.

<sup>386</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 181, n. Crowland.

<sup>387</sup> Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: 1966), p. 133.

<sup>388</sup> Margaret Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London: 1984), pp. 248-9.

<sup>389</sup> VG, XXVIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 92-3. Also OEVG, IV and homily XXIII, ll. 1-5.

<sup>390</sup> From A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Cambridge: 1970), pp. 115, 117.

<sup>391</sup> '*a proximis habitatoribus heremi...usque in Crugland deductus est*'; VG, Table of Contents, XXV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 68-9, 88-9.

<sup>392</sup> VG, XXIV; *Ibid*, p.86.

<sup>393</sup> Darby, *The Medieval Fenland*, p. 16. Figs. 35-6.

<sup>394</sup> Tim Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundations: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia c.650-1200*, pp. 16, 132-3.

<sup>395</sup> Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 12; Darby, *The Medieval Fenland*, p. 17; Hayes and Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," p. 200; John Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology* (Cambridge: 2004), p. 66; Kelley M. Wickham-Crowley, "Living on the *Ecg*: The Mutable Boundaries of Land

and Wisbech, on the Welland, Ouse/Nene estuaries to the north, with Medehamstede and Roman *Durobrivae* (Water Newton) along major route ways such as Car Dyke, the Nene River and Roman roads located to the south and west. Research on fenland river canals suggests a lack of interest in increasing accessibility to Crowland promontory even though Felix reveals that it had been known locally since before Guthlac's arrival.<sup>396</sup> Factors such as its inaccessibility, remoteness or even the strangeness of its ancient topography, must have contributed to the inappropriateness of settlement on the peninsula since there was choice land for industry, farming and settlement as close as 8 miles away. Nor was this the decision for a hermit to choose an isolated island apparently anomalous, for Sarah Foot has discussed several analogues in which hermits chose islands for personal reasons and gained support for the 'charisma' of their extreme character.<sup>397</sup> If it is so hard to believe that Guthlac would not have been dependent upon nearby Medehamstede, as John Hines suggests, then one would expect to find reference to this reliance in Felix's *Life*, where such evidence can be found for the more distant Mercian bishopric.<sup>398</sup> Felix's descriptions of Crowland rather appear to be designed to portray the ideal setting, both in topography and landscape, for ascetic living by *not* mentioning surrounding fenland administrative, industrial and ecclesiastical centres from which the sick, curious and pious must have come. Contextual and archaeological assessments completed to date fail to convince that Crowland was anything other than a remote 'island' in the fenland marshes, chosen for its suitability as a hermitage.<sup>399</sup>

Subsequently, the description of Guthlac's first dwelling as a hollowed out burial mound surely cannot have derived solely from Antonian influences when it clearly could have been used to reference native tomb forms and even more uniquely, a contempt for their vandalism. A similar perception of barrow plunderers appears in the poem *Beowulf*, which has been argued by some to reflect East Anglian cultural origins.<sup>400</sup> Modern development of Crowland's gravel peninsula has hindered the search for barrow cemetery formations which would corroborate Felix's description of Guthlac's first hermitage, however many antiquarian accounts relate the removal of

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and Water in Anglo-Saxon Contexts," in *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (University Park: 2006), p. 101.

<sup>396</sup> For example see James Bond, "Canal Construction: An Introductory Review," in *Waterways and Canal-Building in Medieval England*, ed. John Blair (Oxford: 2007), pp. 163, 184. Fig. 37.

<sup>397</sup> Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), pp.97, 284.

<sup>398</sup> Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology*, p. 69. More discussion of this work in the next section.

<sup>399</sup> Recent press releases by the Royal Geographic Society on the prevalence of canals and the accessibility of the Fens have yet to convince that Crowland can be included in this argument. I have contacted various persons involved for comment on the direct relationship between canals and the abbey at Crowland but have never received a response. Tim Pestell's analysis using various physical methods (i.e. archaeology, field walking, aerial photography, metal-detecting finds and evidence of Ipswich pottery use) concludes that Crowland must have had 'low intensity occupation' from Guthlac's time through to its regeneration in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> c.; *Landscapes of Monastic Foundations: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia c.650-1200*, pp. 132-3. Similarly S. Foot used documentary evidence to demonstrate that this type of foundation was not anomalous; *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), pp. 47, 97.

<sup>400</sup> *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, trans. Seamus Heaney (New York: 2000), ll. 2210b-2293a, pp. 150-5. Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 81-3; Sam Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Cambridge: 1993), pp. 132-45. Also J. Hines, "Beowulf and Archaeology-Revisited," in C.E. Karkov and H. Damico, *Aedificia Nova: Studies in honour of Rosemary Cramp* (Kalamazoo: 2008), pp. 101-3.



*tumuli* which once formed a 'series which are situated in a line running directly northeast from the abbey to the hill in Anchorage Field and southwest from the abbey to the Steam Mill lot.'<sup>401</sup> Hayes and Lane also record the prevalence of barrows to the south of Crowland along the Fen margin and, though one of these barrows included a Roman cinerary urn, the prevalent date of the barrow cemetery is thought to be early Bronze age, helping to establish the accuracy of Felix's topography and bring to light findings which have come forth since both Colgrave and Roberts published their editions of Guthlac texts.<sup>402</sup>

The historical Guthlac may in fact have inhabited a plundered barrow, perhaps even one of the barrows which once ran along the axis of Crowland peninsula, but it is impossible to speculate which one. Nonetheless, considerable attention was given to Anchorite or Anchor church hill, located a quarter of a mile northeast of the abbey in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The name itself strongly suggests that this site functioned at one time as an hermitage, though it was Dr. Stukeley who first recorded that 'upon a hillock, is the remnant of a little stone cottage, called Anchor church-house: here was a chapel over the place where St Guthlac lived as a hermit and where he was buried.'<sup>403</sup> A more valuable description including measurements was then provided in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Canon E. Moor and A.S. Canham recorded the dimensions of a foundation prior to the removal and reuse of the stonework by the property owners. Moore curiously records that: 'The foundations consisted of two parallel walls running east and west, about 14 feet apart and 84 feet in length. On either side, towards the western end, was a room, making the whole width of the western end 42 feet. These foundations consisted of concrete walls, nearly 3 feet thick, with, at intervals, substantial bases of un-hewn stone, more than 8 feet square, three on each side, opposite to each other, about 12 feet apart, with an intermediate base (half the size of the other bases) between the two easternmost bases on the south side.'<sup>404</sup> The plan set out to accompany these descriptions appear reminiscent of a small chapel, as Colgrave acknowledges, though whether Anchor church hill was actually the original site of Guthlac's oratory is a question impossible to answer in the absence of more modern archaeological assessment not only of this barrow, but of the others which were levelled in the last century.<sup>405</sup> Even if this was the site of the oratory described by Felix as overlying a ruined barrow, then it is more than likely that such a site would have been renovated by Guthlac's community over the years, such as was Cuthbert's hermitage on the Farne islands.

<sup>401</sup> From notes in the Spalding Gentlemen's Society as cited by Hayes and Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," p. 197; Canham, "Archaeology of Crowland," p. 288. Fig. 39.

<sup>402</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 182-4; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p.132n. One of these notable recent analyses is Tim Pestell's *Landscapes of Monastic Foundations: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia c.650-1200*, pp. 132-3.

<sup>403</sup> Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum, Centuria 1-11*, p. 34. Figs.20-1.

<sup>404</sup> Canham, "Archaeology of Crowland," pp. 133 ff; his plan was copied by de Gray Birch, ed., *Memorials*, p. xlii. Fig. 22.

<sup>405</sup> Colgrave discusses the 'prehistoric air' that the unhewn stone must have given the chapel, though he quotes Dr. Daniel and Professor Ian Richard's observations that Anchor church hill is some distance from main centres of prehistoric monuments; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 182-4, note on 'Guthlac's dwelling-place'. These observations have been disproven by not only the dated accounts of local antiquaries but by new methods recorded and discussed by Hayes and Lane, "The Fenland Project: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens," p. 197.

Contrastingly, the present-day church marks the site of Guthlac's oratory directly onto its western front, just to the right of the nave doors.<sup>406</sup> The construction of an abbey at Crowland two hundred years after the area became known as a holy site, coupled with the preceding violence of the ninth century, might help to explain how Guthlac's original oratory atop a barrow became lost.

Nor is it possible to rule out what later building campaigns at Crowland Abbey were built on top of, as Crowland's ruins have never been fully excavated. The surviving ground plan of the abbey ruins indicates a nave of 183' x 87' with nine bays and aisles and an apsidal choir of 90' with five bays, though the north aisle is the only portion of this original structure still intact and in use.<sup>407</sup> The cloister and monastic buildings have in the most recent centuries, served as the cemetery for the north aisle's parish church. Archaeological assessments of the foundation made prior to these numerous inhumations indicated that it was 'laid on piles of wood drove into the ground with gravel and sand and they have found several of them in tearing up the ruins of the eastern part'.<sup>408</sup> These piles became associated with the wooden constructions of the earliest monastic buildings though these associations remain conjectural. Structural remains which have survived the ruins of time and royalist fortifications, merely evidence two different styles of Norman stonework which are explained by the pseudo-Ingulph's descriptions of the natural disasters of the twelfth century.

Understanding the chronology of this site is further aided by observations made in Felix's *life* about the function of Crowland in the eighth century. Guthlac's first dwelling appears to have been little more than a hut, constructed over top of an existing barrow with a cistern in its side; possibly an adaptation of existing infrastructure that Sarah Foot has argued influenced the layout of early Anglo-Saxon foundations more than 'any ideal notions of its founders'.<sup>409</sup> This was Felix's description of Guthlac's first hermitage, which he testifies was supplied by the eyewitness accounts of the priest Wilfrid and importantly, one Cissa, who became Guthlac's successor at the site.<sup>410</sup> Felix provides no other details of any expansion of the buildings into an oratory and separate living quarters although this must have occurred at some point in order for Guthlac to have offered hospitality to King Æthelbald, bishop Hædda and their retinues, let alone the various pilgrims which visited Crowland. A *domus* at least is referred to in three miracle stories which clearly do not take place in the oratory.<sup>411</sup> Moreover, one attendant, Becel, appears to have lived at the hermitage with Guthlac for some time, though whether he was one of the original boys

<sup>406</sup> Figs. 33-4.

<sup>407</sup> Gough, *History and Antiquities*, pp. 85-6.

<sup>408</sup> Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum, Centuria 1-11*, p. 33 and Canham, "Archaeology of Crowland," p. 293.

<sup>409</sup> 'tumulus agrestibus glaebis coacervatus...in cuius latere velut cistern inesse videbatur; in qua vir beatae memoriae Guthlac desuper inposito tugurio habitare coepit.' VG, XXVIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 92-5. Also S. Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), pp. 46-7.

<sup>410</sup> Wilfrid serves as the eyewitness to numerous miracle stories while Cissa's role as Crowland's next inhabitant is divulged to Abbess Ecgburh; VG, XXVIII, XXXIX, XL XLVIII.

<sup>411</sup> VG, XXXVII, XXXIX, XL; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 116-27.

brought back with Guthlac from Repton is impossible to know.<sup>412</sup> Any monks or abbots mentioned in the *life* are referred to as visitors who travelled to speak with the holy man, indicating that they came from somewhere else, maybe Medehamstede, but they were certainly not recorded as living at Crowland.<sup>413</sup> Clearly details about the original hermitage suit Felix's portrayal of Guthlac's extreme asceticism, as does his obvious reluctance to record anything which might counteract it. Nonetheless, it is doubtful that Felix would not mention that a monastic community at Crowland had been founded by the saint and his oft-mentioned celebrity-patron Æthelbald.

What we can discern from Felix about eighth-century Crowland is that it certainly held an oratory, consecrated along with the island by Bishop Hædda, in which various miracles occurred.<sup>414</sup> He further testifies that this was the place where Guthlac expired and where his sister, in accordance with his final wishes, interred his body. There is no evidence that this arrangement was altered after Guthlac's death, for Felix then records that Pega singularly devised her brother's elevation and ministered his relics from Guthlac's oratory at least once afterwards.<sup>415</sup> Indeed, Felix's statement that Cissa '*nunc nostris temporibus sedem Guthlaci viri Dei possidet*', hints that the site had the same function after Guthlac's death as it had before it.<sup>416</sup> This may have been the reason that Pega called '*fratribus presbiterisque...et aliis ecclesiasticis gradibus*' to witness the elevation of her brother's remains; there were none already on hand to witness the miracle of his uncorrupted body.<sup>417</sup> Although it appears difficult to argue that *miris ornamentorum structuris* built by King Æthelbald might have only had a couple holy men or even a holy woman to administer to it, there is really no indication in Felix that he was aware of any change in the function of Crowland in the years following Guthlac's death. Æthelbald's shrine is further described in this chapter as a *memoriale quoddam* which, as Rollason points out, signals that it was perhaps only a chapel or royal minster.<sup>418</sup> Recent work by Sarah Foot has demonstrated how early Anglo-Saxon minsters were not uniform in their development, growing from benefactors needs or *ad hoc* around a popular individual, calling careful attention to how we perceive the development of religious foundations prior to the tenth century.<sup>419</sup> Subsequently, a small number of inhabitants in the early years at Crowland is not impossible. Moreover, the Old English *Martyrology* valuably asserts '*þæs lichoma resteð on þære stowe ðe is cweden Cruwland*', attesting that his remains were still on site over a century later.<sup>420</sup> If there is no

<sup>412</sup> Felix records that Becel offered himself as a servant. He is still living with the saint when he dies. Guthlac's two boy attendants are recorded in VG, XXXV-VI, L.

<sup>413</sup> VG, XXXVII, XLIII, XLIV.

<sup>414</sup> *Cella* and *oratorius* are used (VG, XXXI, XXXIV, XXXVII, XLI, L) until the bishop arrives then *ecclesia* is used (VG, XLVII); Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 100-7, 108-11, 116-9, 126-31, 144-7, 150-61.

<sup>415</sup> VG, LI, LIII.

<sup>416</sup> VG, XLVIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 146-9.

<sup>417</sup> VG, LI; *Ibid.*, pp. 160-3.

<sup>418</sup> Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 42. Nor would this type of foundation be unusual in this area, as shown by Tim Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundations: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia c.650-1200*.

<sup>419</sup> S. Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), pp. 97, 348.

<sup>420</sup> Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, p. 53.

conclusive evidence to identify Crowland as the cell of a particular monastery then could it be that this was actually an independent oratory, sustained by royal support until at least the tenth century?

We are told by his hagiographer that Guthlac received suppliants of all grades, '*abbates, fratres, comites, divites, vexati, et pauperes*' at Crowland as his notoriety spread and though this phrase was borrowed from Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*, it has been explicitly expanded here to name ranks.<sup>421</sup> The miracle stories in this *vita* relate how Guthlac advised high status friends, like the Mercian king and noble abbess Ecgburh, though his relics were also contrastingly used to heal a free peasant in an anomalous reference to this class having access to a saint's relics in the surviving hagiography from Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>422</sup> Of the miracles themselves, Felix records seven in which laymen benefitted from or were witness to Guthlac's powers.<sup>423</sup> That amounts to over half of the chapters concerning miraculous events in Felix's *vita*. While this may not be conclusive in itself of Crowland having been supported by lay patrons, it does indicate that Felix thought it important to make known Guthlac's special appeal for the laity.

It is further important to remember that Guthlac by type was a hermit-saint, whose fame was conventionally determinate upon visitors coming to Crowland to bear witness to his sanctity. Brief references to hermits in other sources indicate that they well-respected recluses who were sought out at their hermitages by religious and lay persons for their discourse and prophetic abilities. For instance, the Anonymous *Life of St Cuthbert* relates how a certain anchorite Hereberht of Carlisle frequently travelled to meet with Cuthbert and was even granted the foreknowledge that they would enter the kingdom of Heaven together.<sup>424</sup> Felix's Guthlac was similarly sought out for his prophetic abilities which dominate no less than nine chapters of his *vita*.<sup>425</sup> The most important aspect of these prophecies, however, is their content when considering the possibility of royal endowment at Crowland. Like Cuthbert, Guthlac advises a royal abbess friend regarding future successions, though uniquely, only Guthlac is recorded to have both personally promised the throne to a hopeful royal candidate and later reconfirmed the prophesy after his death in a vision.<sup>426</sup> The importance of Guthlac's role in Æthelbald's accession cannot be under stressed. This particular prophesy on its own serves to not only authenticate the attainment of sanctity during Guthlac's lifetime but to set up the intercessory success of the post-mortem cult. J.E. Damon has already inferred that Æthelbald provides a textual model for how a king may achieve his goal through piety and the intercession of the saints, which in Æthelbald's example, shows the miraculous transformation of this man from hunted exile to powerful king with

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<sup>421</sup> VG, XLV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 138-9.

<sup>422</sup> VG, LIII; *Ibid*, pp. 166-71. Bede records how people carried off the earth from the sites where King Oswald and Bishop Hæddi had died to protect their crops and livestock but this kind of relic was not one administered to people by the ecclesiastical authorities; *HE*, III.30, IV. 13, V.18.

<sup>423</sup> VG, XL, XLI, XLII, XLV, XLIX, LII, LIII.

<sup>424</sup> AVC, IV. IX; Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>425</sup> VG, XXXV, XXXVII, XL, XLIII, XLIV, XLVI, XLVIII, XLIX, L.

<sup>426</sup> Prophetic miracles are the subject of VG, XXXV, XXXVII, XL, XLIII, XLIV, XLVI, XLVIII, XLIX, LII. Guthlac prophecies regarding his successor at Crowland in VG, XLVIII like AVC, III.VI; *BVCP*, XXIV.

Guthlac in the role of spiritual advisor.<sup>427</sup> Yet what he does not highlight is how the post-mortem vision in particular advertises the potency of Guthlac's intercessory abilities and the appropriateness of rewarding their fulfilment, as Æthelbald's royal model does, with his *miris ornamentorum structuris*. Felix's life was even dedicated to a king, ensuring that the audience of this work be made directly aware of the rewards of devotion to this particular saint.

Two possibilities arise for Crowland's function, if we consider that it was a royal foundation. Sarah Foot has suggested that Repton, where Guthlac became a clerk, might have been a royal foundation, staffed entirely by clerics.<sup>428</sup> As such, it may have been the most obviously protected destination for a warlord of royal blood to have taken up the religious life. In addition, Cubitt suggests that Repton's role and function may have been mirrored at Crowland, where Felix's references to two boys and the cleric Becel supply the staff necessary for performing liturgical duties.<sup>429</sup> It is therefore possible that Guthlac was like the monastic priest Hæmgisl who was befriended by King Aldfrith and admired for the *bonis actibus* he performed in the vicinity of Drythelm's *villulae oratorium*.<sup>430</sup> On the other hand, it is equally likely that Crowland was a place made famous by its holy man and his extraordinary visions, benefitting from royal patronage only once his reputation became known. A comparative parallel for this scenario might be Bede's tale of how the layman Drythelm left his family to inhabit the village oratory after experiencing a terrifying premonition of the Otherworld. Once his story was relayed by the priest Hæmgisl to King Aldfrith, the king arranged for Drythelm to be accepted into the monastery at Melrose where he was then provided with a '*locum mansionis secretorem*'.<sup>431</sup> So too might Guthlac have been made a priest by the Mercian bishop because his patron ruler desired it be made so. While the timeline of Felix's narrative might appear to favour the latter likelihood, it would be speculative to propose anything more regarding Crowland's role and function from what little can be derived from the sources. It is nevertheless important to recognize that oratories inhabited by solitaries were not infrequent, as demonstrated by Sarah Foot, nor were they all 'likely' controlled by minsters, as John Blair has concluded in his recent book.<sup>432</sup> It is just as likely that Crowland was a holy site which was supported by the royalty and to a lesser extent the nobility and *thegns*, which comparative references prove had an interest in hearing otherworldly visions and future prophesy, just as they had an increasing interest in building churches.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>427</sup> John Edward Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Hampshire: 2003), pp. 81, 88.

<sup>428</sup> Cited from conversation with the author; Catherine Cubitt, "Pastoral Care and Conciliar Canons: The Provision of the 747 Council of Clofesho," in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester: 1992), pp. 208-10.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-10.

<sup>430</sup> *HE*, V.12.

<sup>431</sup> *HE*, V.12. Foot identifies that it is Guthlac's prayers, vigils and fasts which were highlighted in Felix's *vita*, not his pastoral concern or liturgical responsibilities; *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), p. 215.

<sup>432</sup> S. Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600-900* (Cambridge: 2006), p. 248; J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, especially pp. 145, 220.

<sup>433</sup> Two good examples of *gesiths* requesting a bishop to dedicate their church appear consecutively in *HE*, V.4, 5. Bede's letter voices his concerns that lay donations were not approved by a bishop, that they evaded taxation and that above all, they failed to adhere correctly to monastic rule. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-6.

Furthermore, if we are to consider the possibility that Guthlac's oratory was maintained by royal support in the absence of ecclesiastical promotion, then it might be expected that the early cult would reflect the relevant political concerns or interests of its patrons. In this too the *Vita Guthlaci* does not disappoint, for its details serve to elucidate the relationship between Crowland and the kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia as it existed in the early eighth century, when Felix likely began compiling and writing his *vita*. This relationship is important to our understanding of Crowland's function as it supplies some rationalization for the establishment and promotion of this unique cult at Guthlac's oratory.

When looking at references within the text to East Anglia and Mercia, one can see that unusually there are favourable mentions of both. In regards to East Anglia, Felix significantly discloses that he was commissioned to create a *vita* about St Guthlac by King Ælfwald (c. 713-49) who he labels '*mihi prae ceteris regalium primatuum gradibus...Orientalium Anglorum rite regimina regenti*'.<sup>434</sup> This opening, adhering to conventions set out and copied from other hagiographical works, seems to imply that Ælfwald was Felix's king and that subsequently, Felix was an East Angle. However, such a statement on its own does not make any clearer where the *Life* was written, as Felix fails to mention which *catholicae congregationis* he belonged to and there is no indication that Felix was from Crowland. Colgrave long ago pointed out in his edition that when Ælfwald writes to Boniface promising the prayers of the seven monasteries in his kingdom we remain no clearer about which monasteries these are, whether Crowland was one of them, or even which monasteries were the most likely candidates where Felix may have lived or been educated.<sup>435</sup> Even more interesting is the royal dedication, which survives as one of only two in the hagiography of the seventh and eighth centuries. The other work is Bede's dedication of his *Ecclesiastical History* to the Northumbrian King Ceolwulf whom he records had read and criticized the work more than once, in clear reference to his literacy.<sup>436</sup> Unfortunately, there are no corresponding remarks as to Ælfwald's literacy, although the combination of Felix's dedication and the statement that presents himself first as this king's subject and only secondly as a member of a catholic community has led some scholars to suggest that this text was not only commissioned but created for this royal household.<sup>437</sup>

Conversely, Stenton was certainly not the last scholar to have considered Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* the 'one historical work which has come down from the ancient Mercian kingdom'.<sup>438</sup> This is due to the many references to Mercia which have been perceived to dominate the *life*.

<sup>434</sup> '...to my lord King Ælfwald, beloved by me beyond any other of royal rank, who rules by right over the realm of the East Angles...'; VG, preface; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 60-1. Also Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, p. 78.

<sup>435</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 15-6. Also see Sam Newton for a recent discussion of relevant sees and minsters; Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, pp.134-5. Contrastingly, North hypothesizes that *Beowulf* was composed at Breedon and that the *Vita Guthlaci* was possibly obtained from Medehamstede or Repton for use by this poet. Richard North, *The Origins of Beowulf from Vergil to Wiglaf* (Oxford: 2006), p. 159.

<sup>436</sup> Colgrave and Mynors, eds., *Bede's HE*, pp. xxxix, 2-3, n. 2.

<sup>437</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, p. 29 and Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, p. 78.

<sup>438</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 178.

Felix relates that Guthlac was born in the time of King Æthelred, not during the reign of any particular East Anglian king, and then genealogically traces Guthlac into the Mercian royal family by noting his father Penwalh's descent from Icel, the legendary first king of the Mercian race.<sup>439</sup> While these references may have been merely designed to conventionally address Guthlac's lineage and his place in it, the prevalence of references to the exiled royal-hopeful Æthelbald reflect the importance of Guthlac's role in what John Damon refers to as Æthelbald's 'spiritual transformation'.<sup>440</sup>

Æthelbald is described within the *vita* as a despairing exile, persecuted and harried by King Ceolred, who regularly visits '*ut quando humanum consilium defecisset, divinum adesset*'.<sup>441</sup> Guthlac's assurances that Æthelbald will obtain the Mercian throne only through divine intercession are the subject of two chapters in Felix's narrative while three other chapters allude to Æthelbald witnessing miracles at Crowland; two of which are performed on his men, the *gesith* Ecga and his retainer Ofa.<sup>442</sup> Of the range of people who are recorded as receiving miraculous aid from the saint, none can be more significant than the importance allotted Guthlac's role in the attainment of Æthelbald's throne. Echoes of Mercian over-lordship may be visible in Guthlac's prophesy that God has granted Æthelbald '*tribuit tibi dominationem gentis tuae et posuit te pricipem populorum*' though equally this may have been a stylized statement designed to denote that Æthelbald's accession to the highest possible earthly seat was due to divine intervention, procured by Crowland's holy man.<sup>443</sup> Felix also records that it is Æthelbald, and not an East Anglian king, who built *miris ornamentorum structuris* around the uncorrupted body a year after the saint's death in grateful remembrance of his indebtedness to Guthlac for his throne.<sup>444</sup> References to Guthlac's Mercian links are not confined to the secular ranks as the monastery where Felix records that Guthlac first received the tonsure and was instructed in monastic discipline was Repton, a Mercian royal foundation, and it is the Mercian Bishop Hædda who comes to consecrate Guthlac's oratory and ordain him as a priest.<sup>445</sup> Even abbot Wilfrid, named by Felix as a primary source for information on the saint, comes to Crowland in the company of Æthelbald on at least one occasion, though no indication of what their relationship was can now be known.<sup>446</sup> The perceived dominance of Mercian connections within Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* proves necessary to highlight Guthlac's nobility and the sacrifice of his decision to take up solitary living. Even more importantly, Mercian references serve as a discreet reminder of the obligations and reverence due to a holy man of royal blood whose sanctity was once authenticated by the

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<sup>439</sup> VG, I, II.

<sup>440</sup> Damon, *Soldier Saints*, p. 81.

<sup>441</sup> VG, XLIX.

<sup>442</sup> VG, XL, XLII, XLV, XLIX, LII.

<sup>443</sup> VG, XLIX.

<sup>444</sup> VG, LI.

<sup>445</sup> VG, XIX-XXIV, XXVI.

<sup>446</sup> VG, XL.

most important people in the land. Such tactics were surely designed to combat the risk of Guthlac's remains lying forgotten in the marshy borderlands between East Anglia and Mercia.

Moreover, it can be argued that textual references to the saint's East Anglian affiliations may be more numerous than previously thought, in order to complement the dedication to an East Anglian king. There is the lengthy miracle of the possessed boy Hwætred, son of an East Anglian nobleman, being cured at Crowland.<sup>447</sup> Also, the free peasant from the region of the Wissa must have come from nearby, according to place-name evidence and the likelihood that a smaller tribal unit would only have been known by those who had dealings with them.<sup>448</sup> Then there is the reference to the Abbess Ecgburh. It is she who vitally supplies a lead coffin and linen shroud for Guthlac's future burial and probes to learn of his successor, in textual imitation of a conflation of the abbesses Verca and Ælflaed from the *Life of St Cuthbert*.<sup>449</sup> We are not told of how Guthlac knew Ecgburh, as the only details recorded by Felix are that she was the abbess of an unidentified house and the daughter of King Aldwulf, who was the predecessor of Felix's patron Ælfwald. Nevertheless, the Biddles have argued that Guthlac's Ecgburh must have been an abbess of Repton because they found a charter by an abbess Ecgburh who granted a lead-producing mine at Wirksworth, Derbyshire.<sup>450</sup> Barbara Yorke undermines this possibility by explaining that the only way an East Anglian princess would have become abbess of a Mercian royal foundation would be if she inherited the place through her mother, making it far more plausible that Ecgburh headed a leading East Anglian house like Ely. She further destabilizes the association between Guthlac's Ecgburh and the Derbyshire lead mine by pointing out how East Anglian Ely had used a recycled marble casket, scavenged from a Roman cemetery, to elevate the remains of St Æthelthryth.<sup>451</sup> Thus an Ecgburh of Ely could have recycled a lead coffin from the same or another nearby Roman cemetery for Guthlac, as Seaxburh had done for Æthelthryth.<sup>452</sup> Moreover, if Ecgburh was an abbess of Repton after Ælfthryth, then a more plausible context for their acquaintance might have been supplied by Felix, who has already been

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<sup>447</sup> VG, XLI

<sup>448</sup> VG, LIII. Colgrave's notes for this chapter draw attention to the river Wissey, from whence the people could have taken their name; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 195.

<sup>449</sup> Abbess Ecgburh provides Guthlac with a linen shroud and lead casket in which to be buried in return for details regarding his successor at Crowland; VG, XLVIII, L; OEVG, XVIII, XX. These episodes were clearly modelled on a conflation of St Cuthbert's friendship with abbess Verca who provided his death shroud (VCP, XXXVII) and abbess Ælflaed to whom he shared predictions about his bishopric and the demise of her brother King Ecgrith (VCP, XXIV). There is also the possibility that abbess Ecgburh had no friendship with Guthlac but that she was inserted into a conventional borrowing which would also appeal to his patron. I base this theory upon Felix's confusion of the shroud-giver Ecgburh with the anchorite Ecgrith; VG, XLVIII, L, LI; OEVG, XVIII, XX.

<sup>450</sup> M. Biddle and B. Kjølbye-Biddle, "The Repton Stone," *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985), p. 235. Rollason concurs the identification of Ecgburh with Repton because the 11<sup>th</sup> c *Secgan* records that one St Eadburg rests at Southwell on the Trent river; Rollason, "Lists of Resting-Places," pp. 63, 89. Colgrave disagrees with the *Secgan* identification and mentions of several other variations of the name. He was unaware of charter which the Biddles base their argument upon; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 191n.

<sup>451</sup> HE IV.19; Lead caskets would have been as attainable as marble ones at this or other Roman cemeteries, so argues Yorke, "Nunneries," pp. 27, 31, 44, n. 19. For example of a matrilineal inheritance of an abbey, Yorke cites Mildrith's inheritance of her mother's place at Minster-in-Thanel as different to her sister Mildburg's inheritance of the same role at her father's Much Wenlock house.

<sup>452</sup> Fairweather, ed., *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*, Book I.7, p. 23; referenced by Dorothy Whitelock, "The Pre-Viking Age Church in East Anglia," *Anglo-Saxon England* I (1972), pp. 15-7. Ælfthryth is also the name of Repton's abbess during Guthlac's time there; VG, XX; OEVG, II.



noted to have enjoyed recording Guthlac's links to that country's high ranking people. Jane Roberts' provoking theory that Felix did not name Ecgburh's abbey because Ælfwald would have already known his kinswoman's house presents an invaluable approach which may further aid in resolving Colgrave's concerns as to why East Angles Felix did not mention that Aldwulf was an East Anglian king.<sup>453</sup> Her premise appears all the more relevant when we consider the number of other instances when the origins of visitors to Crowland went unrecorded by Felix. In one miracle story, it is disclosed that a certain unnamed abbot frequently visited and was able to do so within a day.<sup>454</sup> While in another two tales, clerics from *quoddam monasterio* are the focus of Guthlac's prophesies.<sup>455</sup> Even the origins of important named witnesses, like Pega, Abbot Wilfrid, the cleric Becel or anchorite Ecgerht are not supplied, suggesting that it might have been redundant for Felix to catalogue them to an East Anglian audience.<sup>456</sup> Felix's statement that many people came to visit Guthlac '*non solum de proximis Merciorum finibus*' may further attest that Felix, writing for his king, was careful to identify Crowland with East Anglia.<sup>457</sup>

The favourable relationship between East Anglia and Mercia, as portrayed here by Felix, serves to indicate the political climate from which the cult of St Guthlac emerged. The chapters concerning Guthlac's noble lineage and famous Mercian connections ensure that they do not become forgotten after his death while the dedication and internal textual references to East Anglians, like the royal abbess Ecgburh, demonstrate that there was East Anglian interest in this saint. That Guthlac was ordained by a Mercian bishop and entered a royal foundation in this kingdom cannot be seen as irregular in light of his royal blood and this bishop's obligation over him as a former monk of Repton. Some scholars have suggested on the basis of this information that Repton was the drive for initiating the creation of a Latin *life* yet this does not adequately explain the East Anglian royal dedication.<sup>458</sup> It becomes much more plausible to consider, on the basis of Felix's familiarity and identification with his audience that the impetus for a *Life of St Guthlac* came from East Anglia. Perhaps Felix's presentation of an amicable relationship between the two kingdoms in the *life* was meant not only to maintain peace, as Sam Newton has suggested, but to serve as a reminder for Æthelbald of his past spent in exile among the people of the Gyrwe, hypothetically enjoying the favour and protection of Aldwulf, Ælfwald's predecessor.<sup>459</sup>

Additionally, Felix writes that Guthlac grew up in the district of the Middles Angles and then chose to return to this region in search of a suitable hermitage.<sup>460</sup> The majority of Guthlac's

<sup>453</sup> Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 9, n.5 and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 16.

<sup>454</sup> VG, XLIII.

<sup>455</sup> VG, XXXVII, XLIV.

<sup>456</sup> VG, preface, XXVIII, XXXV, XXXIX, XL, XLVIII, L, LIII.

<sup>457</sup> VG, XLV.

<sup>458</sup> Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 118, n. 59 and Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 70.

<sup>459</sup> Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, pp. 80-1. Colgrave romanticizes that Æthelbald had 'grateful remembrances of kindnesses received during his time in exile.' Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 16.

<sup>460</sup> VG, I, XXIV. In the latter chapter, manuscripts B.L. Harleian MS 3097 & Douai 852 use *Mediterraneorum Anglorum* instead of *meditullaneis Britanniae* when describing the Fens. Colgrave's MS H is British Library, Harleian MS 3097; a

lifetime was thus spent living in this border region and many have speculated political pressure as lying behind his choice.<sup>461</sup> But the fact is that geographically Crowland was ideally located on a promontory, suitable because of the ritual significance of its landscape and the isolation that its borderland placement provided for a hermit. Felix's testimony that Æthelbald visited Crowland frequently as an exile fleeing the persecution of Ceolred strongly suggests that he remained out of reach, living amongst the wild fenlands and maybe even East Anglia. The historical geography of the region reveals that East Anglia had possibly had some interactions with tribal groups like the Gyrwe through marital alliance, though it had probably relinquished any authority over the lands directly to its west following Penda's attacks of the 640s when it too was devastated by the Mercian army.<sup>462</sup> This may help to explain why certain identifications were made to the Gyrwe: they were a lesser tribal group which became usurped or absorbed during the seventh century but whose name still had local significance. By the time Ælfwald commissioned Felix, Æthelbald had returned from exile to take up a Mercian territory which not only ruled over lands and monasteries which had previously bordered East Anglia, but it appears, over-lordship over East Anglia as well.<sup>463</sup> If this was the case, then the *Life of St Guthlac* shows Felix's subtle gift to diplomatically paint a picture of Æthelbald's rise to power as affected by the intercession of the humble hermit of Crowland.

Certainly, a precedent had already been set in East Anglia for royal patronage of visionary saints when St Fursa received lands from King Sigeberht and 'shelters and gifts' from his successor, King Anna, and the nobles of East Anglia.<sup>464</sup> So too could kings Æthelbald and Ælfwald have furnished the necessary trappings, like a Latin *vita* and a shrine, in the absence of a monastic community at Crowland. It is even recorded that Fursa left Ultanus the anchorite at Cnobheresburg after he had left, just as Guthlac chose Cissa to be his successor at Crowland following his death. These observations further substantiate that though infrequent, there are other examples of royally supported holy sites like Crowland. Additionally, the later charter evidence for the support Crowland received from the family of Algar suggests that it did not survive in an absence of local, lay support. Nor do I believe Crowland was chosen due to any proximity to an important centre, for this would contradict its original ascetic mandate. The importance of Felix's silence regarding any foundation at Crowland can only be contradicted through further archaeological examination, as analysis of the later sources proves that the abbey constructed a foundation legend whose inaccuracies testify to the competition it felt and the loss

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mid-eleventh century Peterborough manuscript. MS D stands for Douai, Public Library 852; an important twelfth-century Crowland manuscript; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 30-1, 39-40.

<sup>461</sup> For instance, Yorke, "Nunneries," pp. 43-4; G. Henderson, *Vision and Image in Early Christian England* (1999), pp. 215-6.

<sup>462</sup> Whitelock, "The Pre-Viking Age Church in East Anglia," p. 7.

<sup>463</sup> Bede says that '*hae omnes provinciae ceteraeque australes ad confinium usque Humbrae fluminis cum suis quaeque regibus Merciorum regi Aedilbaldo subiectae sunt.*' *HE*, V.23.

<sup>464</sup> *HE*, 3.18-9; *Vita Sancti Fursey*, XXXV-VII. These similarities were identified in Chester Kobos, "The Structure and Background of *Guthlac A*," submitted for Ph.D., English Department, Fordham University (1972), pp. 239-41.

of its carefully constructed early histories. For these reasons, the nature of Crowland had a substantial effect upon the development of the cult from its earliest days.

In considering this function, it then becomes possible to consider that Crowland may have been sustained as a holy site due to royal patronage and lay involvement. Such an arrangement would have been implausible, were it not for a favourable relationship between these two kingdoms which allowed Pega to elevate her brother's remains and Felix the occasion to create a Latin *life* for one king which details another king's indebtedness for kindnesses received while he was in exile. Moreover, as a hermit-saint, Guthlac exemplified the highest possible level of ascetic perfection which also ensured his suitability as both a model and protector for the community that later adopted the site, if not all its original function. Nevertheless, the historical geography can only supply part of our understanding as to why Crowland was of interest to both East Anglia and Mercia. This was the physical barrier that Crowland's historical geography illuminated. The other prerequisite for Guthlac's choice of Crowland can be supplied by exploring the psychological barrier formed by perceptions of the fenland landscape.

### **Crowland's landscape and its bearing on the cult**

The fenland landscape was almost certainly a suitably desolate substitute for the deserts of Egypt as Felix repeatedly writes that Guthlac '*avida cupidine heremum quaerere fervebat*' in chapters in which he clearly associates the desert with the fenland region of England.<sup>465</sup> While the historical Guthlac's thoughts regarding this landscape are obviously unattainable, his hagiographer Felix was clearly intent on developing his subject to imitate the Desert Fathers by directly referencing their influence and through textual mimicry of their *lives*. These works set out the tradition that only through a lifestyle of ascetic living and solitary prayer could hermits draw the unseen hordes of demons into battle, making their model of greater relevance to Felix's *Life* than any other surviving contemporary hagiography.<sup>466</sup> The identification of fenland as desert was consequently as integral to the narrative as desert eremitism was to Guthlac's sanctity. The fact of this development has been noted in Colgrave's edition of Felix's *vita*, however none attests to the predominance of Antonine similarity more than Kurtz who argues that it was 'the first saint's Life in the West...that can be said to be truly commensurate with the *Antonius*'.<sup>467</sup> He points out that Anthony's search for seclusion took him to increasingly remoter locations, just as Guthlac travelled first to the Fens before hearing of the isolated and demon-infested isle of Crowland from

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<sup>465</sup> VG, XXIV-VIII. As previously noted, B.L. Harleian MS 3097 & Douai 852 describe the fens as *Mediterraneorum Anglorum*.

<sup>466</sup> Thomas D. Hill concisely traces the tradition and its relevance to Felix's Guthlac; Hill, "Drawing the Demon's Sting: A Note on a Traditional Motif in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*."

<sup>467</sup> Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," p. 142.

local Tatwine.<sup>468</sup> Indeed, Guthlac's decision to inhabit one of Crowland's burial mounds is not unlike Anthony's decision to inhabit a tomb at some distance from his own monastic settlement.<sup>469</sup> It is possible that a hermit like Guthlac chose Crowland because of its resemblance to the tales of the desert which he had heard while living at Repton but it is equally possible that this similarity was the result of the perceptive moulding of Felix, whose scholastic learning provided him with a multitude of suitable and fitting exemplars from which to model his subject. The significance of an Antonine connection for a monastic audience will be further explored in the succeeding chapter, though it is important to recognize that the textual visualizations of Guthlac's Crowland comprise more than hagiographical allusion to the Egyptian desert.

Dorothy Whitelock, Henry Mayr-Harting and most recently Sam Newton, have all argued that the depiction of the monstrous in Felix's *vita* bears a striking resemblance to the poem *Beowulf*.<sup>470</sup> Whitelock was the first to propose that this similarity might point towards people of this age thinking unknown areas full of monsters and demons while acknowledging the suitability of the Fens to this popular perception.<sup>471</sup> Many others have since sought to identify aspects within *Beowulf* which might suggest a different geographical context, however Newton has convincingly explained the similarities between Guthlac's desert and the Fens through analysis of Anglian historical, comparative and archaeological evidence in order to argue how both *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci* might specifically evidence 'a wider Anglian interest in monster lore'.<sup>472</sup> The fact that the Fens were regarded as haunted by 'the enemy of mankind' – a term used for both Crowland's demons and Grendel's kind – is not the only similarity between the landscape visualized in these two works; the unusual reference to Guthlac's barrow as previously disturbed by greedy treasure hunters may have its twin in the slave stealing a gem-studded goblet from the earth-house hoard in *Beowulf*.<sup>473</sup> This belief in the evil nature of fenland-like landscape serves to further support why both the mere and Crowland are described as uninhabited, and why Guthlac and Beowulf were driven to battle these demons in order to secure Heorot and Crowland as safe havens. Victory over the evil of this landscape permits human habitation, making landscape an integral part of the Guthlac narrative in some of its earliest materials, though we can be less

<sup>468</sup> VA, 3, 8(7), 11(10), 12(11), 49; Ibid, pp. 106-7.

<sup>469</sup> VA, 8(7); White, ed., *Early Christian Lives*, pp. 14-5.

<sup>470</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 71-105; Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, pp. 143-4; Mayr-Harting, *Christianity*, pp. 229-39.

<sup>471</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 75-6.

<sup>472</sup> M. Lapidge, "Beowulf, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex," *Studi Medievali*, 23.1 (1982); R. North, *The Origins of Beowulf from Virgil to Wiglaf* (Oxford: 2006); Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, pp. 142-4. Biggs contrastingly argues that the monsters derived solely from biblical context; "The Dream of the Rood and Guthlac B as a literary context for the monsters in *Beowulf*," in A. Minnis and J. Roberts eds., *Text, Image and Interpretation: Studies in honour of Eamonn Ó Carragáin* (Turnhout: 2007), pp. 296-301.

<sup>473</sup> *Eald gewinna* (the old enemy), 'feond moncynnes' (the enemy of mankind) and 'Caines cynne' (Cain's kin) are reminiscent of 'antiquus hostis proles humanae' (ancient enemy of the human race) and 'semen Cain' (seed of Cain); VG, XXIX, XXXI; *Beowulf*, ll. 107, 164b, 1776a. The barrow is mentioned in VG, XXVIII and *Beowulf*, ll. 2211-2290. Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 71-105; Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, pp. 142-4; Mayr-Harting, *Christianity*, pp. 229-39.

certain, despite the similarities, of the point at which such concepts influenced *Beowulf*.<sup>474</sup> Nor has the suitability of Crowland's landscape and its significance to the Guthlac narrative been lost or undermined in the later versions of it.

The historical geography of Guthlac's hermitage has already highlighted the unlikelihood that Crowland was anything other than a holy site, maintained due to the demonstrable interests of East Anglian and Mercian royalty, yet it has also disregarded the vernacular variations of this cult as contributing nothing to our understanding of the development of the site. That is only partially true, for these texts do not describe infrastructure nor relate the numbers or roles of inhabitants at the site. Nevertheless, texts like *Guthlac A* do contribute to perceptions of Crowland's landscape and the vital role it plays in the development of Guthlac's cult in the centuries before we have any proof of ecclesiastical appropriation or management. Moreover, many literary scholars have variously interpreted descriptions of the landscape as denoting particular developments or periods by linking textual references to context which is a similar methodology to that employed in the first part of this chapter. While it is possible to argue that Crowland's landscape has been discussed more in relation to the vernacular texts than Felix's *vita*, it is even more important to distinguish accurate historical depictions from poetic licence in order to be wary of confusing a text's resonance for a period or development, with fact. The historiography of this point is varied and deserving of discussion here in order to relevantly appreciate the contributions that the vernacular versions make to our understanding of this cult's growth in its fenland landscape.

The vernacular text which has drawn the most wide ranging theories relating to its landscape depictions is certainly the anonymous poem *Guthlac A* of the Exeter book. Chester Kobos' thesis that *Guthlac A* is 'a kind of homiletic discourse upon the heroic nature and prominence of the anchoritic way of life' fittingly reflects *A* poet's focus on the *had* or lifestyle of Guthlac at Crowland.<sup>475</sup> The landscape depicted in this poem noticeably stands out in its descriptions but especially in the *A* poet's visualization of Guthlac's hermitage as a battle-ground, strategically and symbolically, where his way of serving God will be tested. *Guthlac A* first describes Guthlac's hermitage as a *beorgsepel* or 'hilly dwelling-place'— a description which differs not only from the reality of the Fens and Felix's descriptions of it.<sup>476</sup> However, Laurence Shook has argued that *Guthlac A*'s 'hilly dwelling-place' was not an inaccurate term but a 'very practical concept' of what Felix's *tumulus* and other barrows were like.<sup>477</sup> He supports this theory with the other terms used to describe Guthlac's residence: *dygle stowe* (a secret place), *on*

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<sup>474</sup> For instance, Lapidge elucidated how the surviving manuscript of *Beowulf* contains much literal confusion which may have been the result of the present manuscript's scribes being unfamiliar with older letter forms. He posits that *Beowulf* may have had at least 3 stages of transmission, beginning with an early eighth-century archetype. Thus consideration of the similarities between the surviving *Beowulf* text and Felix's *vita* may be explained through a number of possibilities. M. Lapidge, "The archetype of *Beowulf*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 29 (2000).

<sup>475</sup> Kobos, "The Structure and Background of *Guthlac A*," p. 5.

<sup>476</sup> *GA*, l. 102; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 252; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 86.

<sup>477</sup> He cites Ælfric's gloss of *beorg* for the Latin *agger* for comparison— *agger* is a word used to denote any kind of artificial elevation of earth, stone, etc.; Shook, "Burial Mound," p. 4.

*westenne* (in the wasteland), *on þam anade* (in the desert), *meaclond* (borderland) and *on þære socne* (within a jurisdiction or district) which he argued testify to the *A* poet's knowledge of Guthlac's hermitage and his reluctance to 'speak of endless swamps, inaccessible islands, unknown streams'.<sup>478</sup> For Shook, the phrase *beorg on bearwe* matches Felix's general description of the Fens having *crebris insularum nemorumque... anfractibus* and his more direct reference to Guthlac *inter umbrosa solitudinis nemora solus*.<sup>479</sup>

Those who support Shook's theory that the *A* poet was providing accurate landscape descriptions like Felix have usually sought to substantiate them by providing further explanations. Wentersdorf suggests that the 'barrow in a grove' symbolizes a monument long associated with demonic inhabitants and pagan practices, so that use of this phrase denotes Guthlac's 'public challenge' to reclaim the area for his God, as part of the greater Christian campaign to suppress heathendom.<sup>480</sup> He maintains that it was a common belief that these mounds were haunted by dragons but could be reclaimed or built to honour and preserve the memory of a hero, so that the audience of this poem would have 'recognized an echo of this custom' in *Guthlac A*.<sup>481</sup> The 'naming' or ownership of the mound in *Guthlac A* has also been the focus of articles by Alfred Siewers and Wickham-Crowley, who interpret Guthlac's chosen home to reflect a 'monumentalization of the landscape'.<sup>482</sup> Legitimizing a site through claiming it, Guthlac creates a mnemonic tag in the landscape under both his physical and spiritual control. Siewers supports his theory, like Wentersdorf, with source analogues to Ireland and Wales which are disconnected geographically and were recorded much later.<sup>483</sup> Wickham-Crowley has more cautiously focused her comparisons, suggesting that migration to outlying sites was a 'founding and defining' tenet of Anglo-Saxon culture.<sup>484</sup>

The difficulty with these theories is that they strive to assert that narratives of taking possession are like the physical statement of prehistoric monuments; that they are part of a formative era of nation-building, of promoting political (Mercian) hegemony, where there is no surviving literature from this period to attest to it.<sup>485</sup> The appropriation of pagan landmarks has

<sup>478</sup> *GA*, ll. 159, 208, 296, 174, 356, 716; *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>479</sup> Translated 'studded with wooded islands' and 'in the shady groves of this solitude' in Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 87, 89; *VG*, XXIV, XXV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 86-9. Shook, "Burial Mound," p. 5.

<sup>480</sup> Karl P. Wentersdorf, "Guthlac A and Battle for the *Beorg*," *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Medieval Language and Literature* 62, no. 1 (1978), pp. 139-141.

<sup>481</sup> Dragons inhabit mounds of treasure in *Beowulf*, ll. 2211b-2311, and *Maxims II*, ll. 21-8. And archaeology of sites like Sutton Hoo support their existence although Guthlac is not motivated by grave goods when he transforms a site which had already been broken into by those who were interested in such worldly goods. *Ibid*, pp. 136-8.

<sup>482</sup> Alfred K. Siewers, "Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac's Mound and Grendel's Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation Building," *Viator: Medieval Studies* 34 (2003), p. 28.

<sup>483</sup> He argues that mounds were entry points to the indigenous Otherworld as testified by legends of the mounds of Newgrange; citing a 1968 source, and Arberth (now Narberth), where the *Mabinogi* says a curse was set and lifted. He then argues that Anglo-Saxons too believed this, but he gives only one reference and that to Weland the smith-god thought by the people of Wessex to have lived in a Neolithic Long barrow. He suggests that mounds were identified with earlier inhabitants of the landscape. *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>484</sup> She supports her theory using *Beowulf*, *Guthlac A* and Cuthbert's decision to inhabit the Farne islands; Wickham-Crowley, "Living on the *Ecg*: The Mutable Boundaries of Land and Water in Anglo-Saxon Contexts," pp. 97-9, 105.

<sup>485</sup> Siewers, "Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac's Mound and Grendel's Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation Building," pp. 4-8; Catherine A.M. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400* (Cambridge: 2006), I-III.

been noted in the overlay of Christianity in the British Isles, sometimes also for important political or business transactions.<sup>486</sup> The historical Guthlac may have considered Crowland suitable because of these demonic superstitions or because he perceived some significance in this landscape, yet these scholars fail to distinguish more reasonable personal or eremitic grounds for appropriating the site from more tenuous theories of widespread political appropriation. It is much more plausible to interpret that *Guthlac A*'s survival in a West Country manuscript was due to its resonance for the Benedictine requisitioning of land and seizure of abbeys, as has been brilliantly elucidated by Christopher Jones and Catherine Clarke.<sup>487</sup>

The Guthlac legend, whether the *A* poet knew Felix or not, depended upon Guthlac fulfilling the obligations of his chosen path to obtain sanctity through isolating himself in order to battle demons. That a vernacular poem was created on this subject testifies to the heroic importance of a hermit's way of life, just as *Guthlac B* focuses on the nobility of death, showing how a poet could single out and develop individual themes. To consider that this work represents migration or settlement of the fenland region, one might expect the poet to have named the location, to have testified to some affiliation or infrastructure, or even to have recorded that Guthlac, as we know, was interred there as further testament to his claim on the land. None of these elements are exhibited in *Guthlac A*. The absence of all of these details in this poem strongly support that political concerns were not part of the author's designs. Like Cubitt's argument that Bede omitted 'virtually all of the geographical material' from the *Anonymous Vita Sancti Cuthberti* in order to convert it into 'Romanizing propaganda', the *A* poet synthesizes the most important aspects of Guthlac's landscape allegorically to enforce heroic portrayal of the hermits' *had*.<sup>488</sup> Moreover, arguments like John Hines' that this poem was composed to commemorate how the Fens were tamed through fishing, grazing, salt-making and the foundation of a Benedictine abbey fails to notice that these settlements and their industries expanded along the shoreline and on some of the larger islands at some distance to Crowland.<sup>489</sup> Hines' methodology is interesting but it is important not to confuse *Guthlac A*'s resonance for claiming an area for God with the realities of settlements in Crowland's vicinity, poetic licence, or the necessities of ascetic life.

Furthermore, the aforementioned interpretations in no way take into account the metaphoric importance of this particular landscape to the narrative development of *Guthlac A*.

<sup>486</sup> Ailiki Pantos and Sarah Semple, eds., *Assembly Places and Practices in Medieval Europe* (Dublin: 2004).

<sup>487</sup> Catherine A.M. Clarke, "The Allegory of Landscape: Land Reclamation and Defence at Glastonbury Abbey" in *On Allegory: Some Medieval Aspects and Approaches (with an Introduction by Eric Stanley and an Afterword by Vincent Gillespie)*, ed. Mary Carr, K.P. Clarke, and Marco Nievergelt (Newcastle: 2008); Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*."

<sup>488</sup> Catherine Cubitt, 'Memory and narrative in the cult of the early Anglo-Saxon saints,' pp. 30, 40, 42-3. Siewers argues that this allegorization, found in Bede and Gregory's works, 'commended itself to nascent Christian Anglo-Saxon realms like Mercia on grounds of both ecclesiastical genealogy and the political necessity of defining a sovereign identity for the state.' Siewers, "Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac's Mound and Grendel's Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation Building," pp. 19-20.

<sup>489</sup> Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology*, pp. 62-3, 65-70. This was also argued, without the contextual references to industry by Calder, "*Guthlac A & B*: Some Discriminations," p. 78.

Attempts to reconcile the terms used in *Guthlac A* and the *Vita Guthlaci* appear as though scholars were more intent on drawing parallels between Felix and the *A* poet regardless of the meanings of these terms and the independent intentions of each work. For instance, Shook supports his theory of the *A* poet's familiarity with the fenland by referencing that Crowland is once said to be located *on þære socne* which he argues 'could imply a political or ecclesiastical territory' in terms 'suitable enough for the Fens', when the literal context of this phrase as part of St Bartholomew's rebuke to the demons clearly denotes God's jurisdiction over Guthlac as his Lord and Bartholomew's as his protector.<sup>490</sup> It would be nice if the *A* poet had opened a section with its setting like Felix's chapter XXV but that would not suit the style of this work. Thus *beorg* or *beorg on bearwe* or *beorgsepel* may or may not refer to the actual setting at Crowland though they are integral to the theme of *Guthlac A*.

Let us not, moreover, overlook the significance of *beorg* within the narrative of *Guthlac A*, a balance which some spectacular research has already remedied. Without the associations of hill or mountain, Langen argues, Guthlac would not be '*sippan biorg gestah*' to take the strategic high ground in the forthcoming battle.<sup>491</sup> She further identifies that a scriptural precedent for climbing the hill was set by Christ's crucifixion and Gregory's *Moralia in Job* which notably describes the loss of Paradise as also having occurred on a hill, so that Christ regained his victory in a similarly symbolic setting: 'And so the Old Enemy was beaten by Adam on a dunghill, he that conquered Adam in Paradise.'<sup>492</sup> Reichardt concurs in that Guthlac's challenge, to climb the mountain and battle its demonic inhabitants, places him at the highest level of ascetic perfection.<sup>493</sup> The visualization of Guthlac's hermitage as a *beorgsepel* can thus be viewed as indicative of Guthlac's hagiographical likeness to both Christ and Job, not to any lack of familiarity with Felix's work or with the geographical landscape itself. Indeed, Jane Roberts suggests that the description of Guthlac's homeland has actually been 'visualized afresh' by the *A* poet with hills envisaged from the *Life of St Anthony*, signalling her thoughts as to the inspiration for this landscape.<sup>494</sup> And Guthlac, like Anthony, fell in love with his surroundings 'as though moved by God'.<sup>495</sup>

Yet not only does the *beorgsepel* occupy the high ground in the strategic sense, implied initially through militaristic terminology and supported by the precedent of Christian exemplars, it also occupies the metaphorical middle-ground between the demon-inhabited Fens and Guthlac's heavenly homeland. Guthlac's victory on this hilltop is what will guarantee his 'return' to heaven

<sup>490</sup> Shook, "Burial Mound," pp. 4-5; contra McKinney, "*Mec Dryhtnes Hand/ Mundað Mid Mægne*: The King's Protection in *Guthlac A*," A55-6.

<sup>491</sup> GA, ll.174-6a; Langen, "Thesis," p. 29.

<sup>492</sup> *Moralia*, l.3.12; translation and citation from Ibid, p. 78.

<sup>493</sup> Paul F. Reichardt, "Guthlac A and the Landscape of Spiritual Perfection," *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Medieval Language and Literature* 58, no. 3 (1974), pp. 336-7.

<sup>494</sup> Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 84.

<sup>495</sup> VA, 50. I disagree with Siewers that this description contrasts with the *Vita Guthlaci* when Felix records that Guthlac loved the surroundings which God directed him to in XXIV, XXV; Siewers, "Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac's Mound and Grendel's Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation Building," p. 18.



rather than his descent, as the demons threaten, to hell. Thus the significance of the *A* poet referring to Guthlac's hill as being in a *meorcland* or 'borderland' may not be so much an accurate description of the political affiliations of the area as a statement of 'the potential for spiritual reward' evident in Crowland's landscape.<sup>496</sup> Abdou adds that the *A* poet's *meorcland* needs to be seen as not only a physical threshold but a metaphorical one which requires Guthlac's extreme asceticism to advance him over the final threshold which separates him from God.<sup>497</sup> These interpretations do not deny the possibility of geographical accuracy; they merely serve to lend weight to the allegorical realities of the *A* poet's narrative focus.

A symbolic, rather than literal, interpretation of Crowland's landscape can be further substantiated by the physical transformation which dramatically occurs in this poem. The *A* poet's description of Guthlac's role as *bytla*, in combination with language for settling and building, foreshadows the conversion of the *beorg* into a *haligne hām*.<sup>498</sup> Initially, Guthlac sets up a cross as his 'rallying-point' for battle.<sup>499</sup> The setting-up of a cross, like both St Botolph's marker for building Icanhoe and King Oswald's before his battle with Cadwallon, is a new addition to the legend, signalling a site where battles are physically and metaphorically fought for Christ.<sup>500</sup> Jane Roberts has recently shown that Guthlac's choice to fight under this symbol indicates his identification as God's soldier and God's favour testified through victory.<sup>501</sup> Like the *beorgseþel*, Guthlac's cross can be argued to have had a similarly symbolic role in this poem, identifying the site of what Christopher Jones terms 'Guthlac's profession' and Guthlac's role to transform Crowland into the perfect *cenobium* for Christ.<sup>502</sup>

The allegorical importance of the *A* poet's landscape is only fully realized after Guthlac's trials at the hands of the demons when '*Sigehreðig cwom/ bytla to þam beorge*' to enjoy a spring-like resurrection in his natural surroundings.<sup>503</sup> Guthlac finds his lodgings 'peaceful anew' and like Persephone returning from the Underworld, 'the countryside was sprung into blossom and the cuckoos heralded the year.'<sup>504</sup> Brian Shaw has suggested that this transformation from a hostile landscape to an earthly Jerusalem was only made possible through Guthlac's rejection of society and his personal victory over his demonic neighbours.<sup>505</sup> The *A* poet even describes how Guthlac, like so many Irish ascetics, '*Swa þæt milde mod wið monncynnes/ dremum gedælde*,

<sup>496</sup> Ibid, pp. 36, 39; Langen, "Thesis," p. 47.

<sup>497</sup> Angela Abdou, "Speech and Power in Old English Conversion Narratives," *Florilegium* 17 (2000), p. 200.

<sup>498</sup> Jones notes similar terms for building and settling in Ps. 83.1, 126.1; Mt. 5.14, 7.24; *BVCM*, ll. 396-98; *BVCP*, XVII;

"Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," pp. 271-4.

<sup>499</sup> *GA*, ll. 178b-180a; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 254; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 88.

<sup>500</sup> Roberts, "Seals of the Cross," p. 124.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid, p. 128.

<sup>502</sup> Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," pp. 282-7. Also Kathleen E. Dubs, "Guthlac A and the Acquisition of Wisdom," *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Medieval Language and Literature* 65, no. 4 (1981), p. 612.

<sup>503</sup> *GA*, ll. 732b-33a; trans.: 'Triumphant, the founder came to the hill;' Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 267; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 105.

<sup>504</sup> *GA*, ll. 743-44a; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 267; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 105.

<sup>505</sup> Brian A Shaw, "Guthlac A and B: Some Thematic Continuities," *Old English Newsletter* 17, no. 2 (1984), p. A-56

*dryhtne þeowde,/ genom him to wildeorum wynne sibban he þas/ woruld forhogde.*<sup>506</sup> Such descriptions do not appear to have been dependent upon Felix, as miracle stories in the Latin *life* reveal only the saint's powers over the natural world, not nature's symbiotic relationship with the hermit.

A similar literary context for this transformation has been identified by some scholars in other Anglo-Saxon poems. For instance, Alfred Siewers argues that Grendel's mere in the poem *Beowulf* is a similarly symbolic landscape. The mere is initially described as located in '*fyrgen-beamas/ ofer harne stan hleonian funde,/ wyn-leasne wudu; wæter under stod/ dreorig on gedrefed*', filled with all manner of water monsters and reptiles.<sup>507</sup> After Beowulf kills Grendel's mother, the landscape correspondingly undergoes a transformation so that the water is described as 'no longer infested'.<sup>508</sup> However, the transformation into a place free of evil also is also implied in the language used to describe Guthlac's hermitage: the A poet no longer refers to the *beorgseþel* following Guthlac's victory over the demons as it has been transformed, like the site of the Hebrews' victory over the Assyrians in *Judith* into a *sigewong* – a place of victory.<sup>509</sup> Even more significantly, the Mermedonian's land is described as a *mearcland morðre bewunder* before it is transformed into a Christianized *wederburg* in the poem *Andreas*.<sup>510</sup> These Old English analogues serve to strongly support an allegorical and symbolic re-visioning of Crowland's landscape into the site of an epic battle between good and evil.

The desolate landscape of the Fens presented not simply the perfect place for ascetic living but allowed Guthlac to challenge the demonic and monstrous creatures superstitiously considered its only inhabitants. The representation of the Fens in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* consequently may reflect common, maybe even specifically East Anglian or neighbouring, perceptions of the fenland landscape and the border-barrier that this area defined to outsiders. However, the anonymous poet of *Guthlac A* refines and allegorizes Crowland similarly to other Old English analogues. The A poet, whether he had heard descriptions of the Fens or not, portrayed Crowland as the requisite high ground between heaven and earth, a place where a *miles Christi* could hold steadfast against demonic assaults, in order to literally and symbolically transform and settle a previously barren borderland. That similar perceptions of the Fens were diffused within texts that differed in genre, language and style at all attests that the landscape was an integral component of the earliest materials. It is however important to recognize distinct textual intentions between the descriptions of landscape found in the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* and *Guthlac A*.

<sup>506</sup> GA, ll. 739-742a; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 267; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 105.

<sup>507</sup> *Beowulf*, ll. 1414-17a; trans.: 'dismal wood,/ mountain trees growing out at an angle/ above grey stones: the bloodshot water/ surged underneath. *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, pp. 98-9.

<sup>508</sup> *Beowulf*, ll. 1620-2; *Ibid*, pp. 110-3.

<sup>509</sup> GA, l. 742; trans.: 'plain where victory is won'; *Judith*, l. 295. Roberts has also identified that this term is used in *Guthlac B*, l. 921; *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 156n.

<sup>510</sup> *Judith*, l. 295 cited by *Ibid*, p. 105n; *Andreas*, l.19,1697 cited by Abdou, "Speech and Power in Old English Conversion Narratives," p. 203. Also Sharma, "A Reconstruction of the Structure of *Guthlac A*," p. 200.

### Candidate sites for the development of St Guthlac's cult

The success of any cult necessitates a focal location, usually housing the tomb or a special association to the saint, where a guardian community can ensure promotion and where rituals and devotions centre. In the case of St Guthlac, there are a number of sites which display early dedications or associations. Some of these may have harboured designs to take up the role of cult centre shortly after his death in 714, warranting an explanation of this particular focus on Crowland. The most likely candidates were sites that had been associated with the saint during his lifetime and which figured prominently in the early hagiography, namely Felix's *vita* and its Old English translation.<sup>511</sup> The descriptive nature of these works ensures functional descriptions of Guthlac's relationship to Repton, Lichfield and Crowland both during his lifetime and shortly after this death. Leaving aside the hagiography, evidence for early dedications, relic possession or liturgical evidence may bring forth other important candidates, such as Hereford. Nevertheless it can be briefly shown that although there were communities which merit important status in their associations to St Guthlac, Crowland stands out uniquely as the cult centre from its earliest days. This section will begin by first considering the roles and questioning the evidence that survives for these lesser associated sites in order to ultimately diminish their role in the momentum and longevity of St Guthlac's cult.

Repton, where Guthlac had taken his vows, has often been considered a cult centre, if not the cult centre in the eighth century. Felix describes it as a double house headed by an abbees at a time when Crowland was still wild fenland.<sup>512</sup> This information alone seems to have put Repton forward as the most likely place where Pega could have lived prior to her brother's death.<sup>513</sup> It has further been suggested that Repton was the impetus for the Latin *vita*, despite its dedication to an East Anglian king, and in all likelihood the place where Felix learned the stories which he would later transform into hagiographical exempla.<sup>514</sup> Yet for Felix to have heard tales at Repton, there has to be some evidence that a relationship had been maintained after Guthlac

<sup>511</sup> The Exeter book poems and Vercelli homily do not reference any location by name although Laurence K. Shook was the first scholar to try to reconcile the landscape descriptions of *Guthlac A* to Felix's *vita*; Shook, "Burial Mound;" Wentersdorf, "*Guthlac A* and Battle for the *Beorg*." I tend to agree with Jane Roberts' comments in her edition to the poems that Shook's identification is not textually reinforced; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>512</sup> Ælfthryth of Repton oversees Guthlac's vows; VG, XX-XXIV; OEVG, III. She is erringly called Ebba on the Harley Roll, see fig.3.

<sup>513</sup> Pega is described as *sanctam Christi virginem* by Felix in his VG, L-LI, LIII and as *pære Drihtnes peowan* in OEVG, XX, implying that she was a religious. Moreover, Pega is described as the force behind her brother's elevation, administering at least one post-mortem miracle in the hagiography; VG, LI, LIII; OEVG, XX, XXII. Barbara Yorke suggests that brother and sister were both members of this house until they departed separately for Crowland; Yorke, "Nunneries," p. 44. A reference to the cave on the Trent being called 'Anker Church' in Repton's records has also been tenuously associated with St Pega because of W. Stukeley's 18<sup>th</sup> c. identification of another 'Anchor Church', east of Crowland, as Pega's cell. Westwood and Simpson are clearly unfamiliar with descriptions of close-lying cells inhabited by Guthlac, Pega and other anchorites in the pseudo-Ingulph's chronicle, not to mention Peakirk, for they refer instead to *Ancarig* or Thorney as this site; Westwood and Simpson, *The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys*, pp. 151-2.

<sup>514</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," p. 328; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 118, n.59; Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 70.

departed to become a solitary and Felix records only one visit to the house, lasting ninety days, which happened shortly after his decision to take up residency at Crowland.<sup>515</sup>

Many point to Guthlac's correspondence with an abbess Ecgburh as proof of a continued relationship with Repton, though the problems with associating the East Anglian princess with this house have already been discussed. Nevertheless, Repton's status as a Mercian royal foundation where many kings, including the saint's friend and patron Æthelbald were buried ensured it was a well-connected house which probably once exploited associations to both Guthlac and the king that he appeared in a vision to.<sup>516</sup> The elaborate crypt which has survived there has been interpreted by Harold Taylor and the Biddles to have enabled access to the tombs and relics once enclosed, making it an ideal infrastructure for a cult.<sup>517</sup> Yet we know from the earliest sources that Guthlac's body remained where he intended it to lie: in his Crowland oratory. Repton may have once possessed some secondary relics of St Guthlac, though each successive royal burial at Repton probably usurped the previous, explaining why the *Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande* records only St Wystan at Repton on the Trent River.<sup>518</sup>

On the other hand, any Guthlac affiliation to Repton may have only been stressed once the beneficiary of his miracles had been laid to rest there in 757, as Felix's *vita* attributes no more to Æthelbald than visits to Crowland while in exile and later, the endowment of a shrine.<sup>519</sup> Certainly, Felix does dedicate his work to Ælfwald of East Anglia, '*mihi prae ceteris regalium primatuum gradibus*', which would further complicate him having composed his *vita* at Repton.<sup>520</sup> It may be that Guthlac's friend Wilfrid, who was named as one of Felix's witnesses and was possibly once a retainer of Æthelbald, belonged to Repton but then Felix curiously does not disclose any relationship to him.<sup>521</sup> It must be said that there is little convincing evidence which secures Repton as anything more than an important association, due to its status simultaneously as both royal foundation and the community which Guthlac had chosen to take his vows. Unfortunately the role Repton had in the early days of Guthlac's cult has been lost as successive burials and relics eclipsed one another, revealing how fleeting a role Repton must have had in its promotion or longevity. By 873-4 the Danish army's *winterseþl* obliterated any remnants of the community there, along with its rituals, so that perhaps the only testimony to Guthlac's spiritual

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<sup>515</sup> VG, XXVI; OEVG, III.

<sup>516</sup> Merewalh, King of the Magonsætan, and kings Æthelbald (d. 757), Wiglaf (c. 840) and grandson Wigstan/Wystan (d. 849) all of Mercia were all noted to have been buried there; Rollason, "Lists of Resting-Places."

<sup>517</sup> Harold Taylor's half-century of work has sought to separate the various stages in Repton's development; H.M. Taylor, "St Wystan's Church, Repton, Derbyshire: A Reconstruction Essay," *Archaeological Journal* 144 (1987), p. 233. Also Martin Biddle and Berthe Kjolbye-Biddle, "Repton and the Vikings," *Antiquity* 66, no. 250 (1992), pp. 36-51. Reference to the site of Guthlac's burial and elevation in VG, L, LI; OEVG, XX, XXI.

<sup>518</sup> Rollason, "Lists of Resting-Places," pp. 63, 89.

<sup>519</sup> VG, XL, XLII, XLV, XLIX, LI; OEVG, XI, XIII, XVI, XIX, XXI, XXII.

<sup>520</sup> VG, prologue.

<sup>521</sup> Wilfrid is recorded as witness and abbot in VG, prologue and is mentioned as being bound to Guthlac through 'spiritual friendship' in XXVIII, XXXIV, XL; OEVG, prologue, IV, X, XI.

presence was the later invention, recorded at the Reformation, of a pilgrimage to a 'Guthlac's bell'.<sup>522</sup>

Another location which appears in the early hagiography, and thus can be considered a likely participant in early cult development, was Lichfield. Felix tells how the bishop himself visited Guthlac at Crowland after hearing of his miraculous abilities and holy life. The purpose of this meeting appears to have been to examine the veracity of Guthlac's reputation, for Felix describes a conversation between members of Bishop Hædda's retinue in which they discuss just this.<sup>523</sup> In particular a certain *virum librarium* named Wigfrith boasts that he has seen so many false hermits in Ireland that he will be able to tell whether Guthlac is truly religious or merely a pretender. Upon meeting Guthlac, the bishop is so impressed that he begs Guthlac to receive priest's orders and to let him consecrate his oratory. The bishop's visit is thus crowned by these validations and if there were any further doubts that the bishop's hand failed to dispel, Guthlac miraculously repeats Wigfrith's comments in front of everyone at their meal. Such an episode must have factored importantly in the validation of Guthlac's cult for it served to not only substantiate his sanctity in the eyes of his critics but to show how the highest ecclesiastical officials paid homage to this saint.

Bishop Hædda from the hagiography has been identified as the bishop of Lichfield, although he jointly held a second see at Leicester sometime after 691, making him an important ecclesiastical official in greater Mercia, as bishop of both the Mercians and the Middle Angles.<sup>524</sup> By these titles, Hædda may have had some jurisdiction over Guthlac if he was growing up in the district of the Middle Angles, descended from Mercian royalty.<sup>525</sup> The Old English translation of Felix's work simply amalgamates its details, describing Guthlac's father as '*sum æpel man on bære heh-peode Myrcna-riçe*.'<sup>526</sup> Certainly, Guthlac's associations may explain why he was visited by so many high-ranking Mercians, including their bishop and future king.<sup>527</sup> On the other hand, perhaps it was only that Guthlac's fame had spread '*non solum de proximis Merciorum finibus, verum etiam de remotis Brittanniae partibus*' that piqued the bishop's curiosity.<sup>528</sup> Whatever the actual reason was, the fact that it was the Mercian, and not East Anglian, bishop who consecrated Crowland attests to Mercian interest in St Guthlac. The importance of this association was first emphasized by F.M. Stenton and has caused others to reconsider Guthlac's

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<sup>522</sup> 'Superstition: a pilgrimage is made to St Guthlac and his bell, which they put on people's heads to alleviate headache.' Recorded by Doctors Layton and Leigh in February 1536; James Gardiner, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, vol. X (London: 1965), pp. 137-8 cited by Blair, "A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints," p. 537.

<sup>523</sup> VG, XLVI-XLVII; Hædde's visit, OEVG, XVII.

<sup>524</sup> Hædda of Lichfield-Leicester has often been confused with the similarly named bishop of Winchester, Hæddi. VG, XLVI; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 190, n.1; HE IV.III; fig.3.

<sup>525</sup> VG, I.

<sup>526</sup> Penwalh was of the *Iclingas*, Mercian royal descent; OEVG, I.

<sup>527</sup> Mercian visitors appear in VG, XL, XLII, XLV, XLIX, LI; OEVG, XI, XIII, XVI, XIX, XXI. Furthermore, VG, LIII's '*quidam vir paterfamilias in provincia Wissa*' becomes a '*scipes-man þæs forespreccenan wræccan Aþelbaldes*' in OEVG, XXII.

<sup>528</sup> VG, XLV.

ordination as proof of a Mercian-Crowland connection.<sup>529</sup> However, an episode that supposedly occurred during Guthlac's lifetime does not necessarily mean that Lichfield had any marked interest in the saint after his death.

Lichfield already had the remains of St Chad, Hædda's predecessor, who similarly had a reputation for ascetic practices and a conveniently nearer hermitage than Guthlac did in far away Crowland.<sup>530</sup> Further to this, Lichfield was also the burial place of King Ceolred, Æthelbald's predecessor and cousin who, if we are to believe Felix, relentlessly drove Æthelbald through various lands.<sup>531</sup> Æthelbald's exile consequently appears to have been due to his place in the line of succession, for Æthelbald took the throne after Ceolred's death. However, the relationship between the two cousins must have made it fairly unlikely for Ceolred to have permitted veneration of a saintly candidate who had harboured his greatest enemy or even one who may himself have once been in line for the same throne.<sup>532</sup> Thacker postulates that because Ceolred's burial was at Lichfield with St Chad, Æthelbald needed a saint who was buried elsewhere to venerate.<sup>533</sup> A combination of issues would thus have made Lichfield and St Guthlac incompatible. It would seem more reasonable, based on this evidence, to consider Mercian involvement from Leicester, rather than Lichfield.

Hædda, who had once visited Guthlac, was not only bishop of Lichfield but the bishop of Leicester after Seaxwulf's death around 691-2. Indeed, Hædda probably embarked from Leicester when he visited, as this was a closer site to Crowland and we know that Seaxwulf also made the trip frequently between Leicester and equidistant Peterborough.<sup>534</sup> The separation of Leicester from Lichfield into an independent bishopric during the reign of Æthelbald may have made possible veneration of Guthlac there. F. Arnold Forster noted that there were once churches at Stathern and Branstone, near to Leicester, that had been dedicated to St Guthlac.<sup>535</sup> However, there are no other surviving testimonies to the links between Guthlac and Lichfield or Leicester than the geography of these two 'ancient' dedications. It would be unwise to further credit the Mercian bishoprics with promoting St Guthlac on the basis of subsidiary church dedications and one hagiographical episode whose purpose was clearly to substantiate Guthlac's reputation. While Leicester certainly has more potential to have been involved in the earliest days of the cult, a lack of conclusive evidence ensures that its role remains unknowable. Moreover, the purpose of this study is to identify a cult centre which visibly influenced the development of the cult, not contributing or subsidiary sites.

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<sup>529</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 49, n. 3. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 190; VG, XLVI, n.1.

<sup>530</sup> HE, IV. 3; Morris, *Churches in the Landscape*, p. 120.

<sup>531</sup> VG, XLIX; OEVG, XIX.

<sup>532</sup> Felix says that Guthlac was descended from Icel, a famous Mercian king; VG, II; OEVG, I.

<sup>533</sup> HE, III.28, IV.3; Thacker, "Thesis," p. 326.

<sup>534</sup> HE, IV.6, IV.12. Fig.40.

<sup>535</sup> Frances Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications or England's Patron Saints*, III vols. (London: 1899), vol. III, appendix III, p. 365.

However, as has been shown in the case of Leicester, it is worthwhile to further consider church dedications and their relative geography as contributing to our idea of a cult nucleus. F. Arnold Forster originally identified ten pre-Reformation dedications to St Guthlac, the majority of which lie within the modern county boundaries of Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Northamptonshire.<sup>536</sup> When plotted on a map, Fishtoft, Deeping, and Little Ponton, all Lincolnshire; Swaffham (anciently Guthlac-stow), Norfolk and Marholm, Northamptonshire all closely encircle the abbey of Crowland, the site of St Guthlac's hermitage, and the church of Peakirk, whose name derives from its association with St Pega, Guthlac's sister. Even the slightly more distant dedications at Passenham, Northamptonshire; Astwick, Bedfordshire and the aforementioned Leicestershire dedications at Braunstone and Stathern are not impossibly segregated from the crucial location of St Guthlac's tomb. Of these dedications, only Braunstone and Stathern are almost closer to either Repton or Leicester than Crowland and while proximity alone cannot be seen to indicate influence, the resulting pattern of dedications strongly favours a core nearer to the Wash. Of all these churches, Arnold Forster has further identified Fishtoft and Deeping as having belonged to Crowland Abbey at some point in their history while the cell at Frieston, which was overlooked in her study, has since been added to this list as well.<sup>537</sup> In fact, when W.H. Bolton undertook to visit the dedications on Arnold Forster's list he remarked that 'a circle of 75 miles diameter would comprehend all twelve, and indeed, five lie virtually within sight of one another'.<sup>538</sup> The only anomalous dedications which survive in the west of the country, outside of this 75 mile diameter circle, are Hereford and three Staffordshire churches which came to be associated with Becel, Guthlac's attendant.

The Staffordshire churches can be discarded at the onset due to Roberts' findings on the origins of their association.<sup>539</sup> Her article sources the confusion regarding the St Bertellin dedications at Stafford, Ilam and Barthomley, showing that a conflation of Bertellin with Becel could have arisen due to a variety of reasons ranging from the inconsistency of scribal spellings to an extraction from the popular dedication to St Bartholomew or the need for factual details to reinforce a sparse hagiographical narrative. It has consequently been proven unlikely that these were the same people and that St Bertellin's *vita* is little more than a puzzling amalgamation of ancient font carvings and descriptions of long-lost relics at Ilam alongside only the most exemplary episodes purloined from Peter of Blois' epitome of St Guthlac.<sup>540</sup> Roberts' conclusion

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid, II, pp. 98-9.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid, II, pp. 95-9. While Deeping's turbulent relationship has long been noted from Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 156, 340, 343-5, 351, 493. I can find no mention of Fishtoft and so am unsure of the basis for Arnold Forster's claims. The gift of Frieston to Crowland by Alanus de Croun was recorded on the Harley Roll. Its foundation in 1141 has been used as the earliest possible date for the Roll; Warner, *The Harley Roll*, pp. 15-6 and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 12. Fig. 40.

<sup>538</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," appendix II, p. 257.

<sup>539</sup> Jane Crawford, "Guthlac: An Edition of the Old English Prose Life, Together with the Poems in the Exeter Book," submitted for Ph.D, English Department, Oxford University (1967).

<sup>540</sup> Seventeenth-century Ilam was described by an antiquarian as having 'a well, an Ash and a tomb' of one 'Bertram' – Crawford notes only a tomb to have survived, though she points out its association and dating are unclear. She also points out that identifications of the Ilam font carvings as those of the Irish princess Bertellin eloped with and impregnated

that 'Becel of Crowland was by the thirteenth century a figure of such minor importance that the details of his life were used to bolster out the cult of a little known Staffordshire saint' appears to be the most reasonable explanation to date for Becel's affiliations in this part of the country.<sup>541</sup>

Hereford, on the other hand, is an unusual case in that it has survived as the only dedication to St Guthlac in the west of England. Roberts once remarked that Crowland had a church of secular canons at Hereford yet it is unclear that any connection ever existed between the two, outside of their mutual dedications.<sup>542</sup> What is more, Hereford's interest in St Guthlac may have been remarkably early as archaeological excavations have revealed a seventh-century cemetery 300m east of the cathedral which has led to speculation that St Guthlac's church was once located there, within the Castle Green and that it was founded as early as Æthelbald's reign.<sup>543</sup> Though the extent of Hereford's importance as a 'central place' has been extensively argued from a variety of angles, it nevertheless can be agreed that it had an early Episcopal seat and was also the focal centre for devotions to another saint, St Æthelberht of East Anglia, by the end of the eighth / early ninth centuries.<sup>544</sup> Indications that these saints were the foci of two separate communities in pre-Conquest times; one dedicated to St Æthelberht, the other to St Guthlac, may well point towards a surprisingly contemporary interest in Guthlac at Hereford, since St Æthelberht was not introduced there until the reign of Offa.

Sources describe the co-existence of these two churches until William Fitz Osbern, lord of Breteuil, was appointed earl of Hereford in 1066. The earliest identification of separate communities appears in the Will of Wulfgeat who leaves '*into sce Guðlac healfes pundes weorð*' and to St Æthelbert's community the same amount.<sup>545</sup> While the Will is undated, identifications have been proposed by Whitelock to be either the testament of Wulfgeat, grantee of Edgar in 963, or the Wulfgeat who was treasonous against Æthelred in 1006.<sup>546</sup> Whichever Wulfgeat it was, the Will testifies to dual communities before the Conquest. Shoesmith, archaeologist of the site, has then conjectured that Osbern's construction of a new motte in the west of Castle Green to connect with the northern rampart at Hogg's mount would likely have drawn St Guthlac's church within the Norman castle boundaries, increasing its inaccessibility.<sup>547</sup> The extent of its isolation after the Conquest may be further seen in the Domesday survey's record that St

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in his youth are better interpreted as showing the Enemy of souls, the Saviour of souls, Baptism and Matrimony; Ibid, pp. 63-4. St Bertellin's hagiographer incorporated only Becel's death-bed ministrations and substituted Becel as one of the unnamed boys who accompanied Guthlac to Crowland. These sections are headed *Qualiter Infirmatus est...*, p. 715 and *De Insula Croilandie...*, p. 703 in PVG. Bertellin's hagiographer neglected to mention the episode in which Becel is tempted by the devil to slit Guthlac's throat whilst shaving him, probably for obvious unsuitability (*Quomodo Clericus...*, p. 707).

<sup>541</sup> Crawford, "Guthlac: An Edition of the Old English Prose Life, Together with the Poems in the Exeter Book," p. 67.

<sup>542</sup> Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 220.

<sup>543</sup> R. Shoesmith, "Hereford City Excavations," *CBA Research Reports* 36, no. 1 (1980); R. Shoesmith, "Hereford City Excavations," *CBA Research Reports* 46, no. 2 (1982); Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western Europe, 600-800*, p. 146.

<sup>544</sup> Margaret Gelling disagrees with Sims-Williams regarding the centrality of Hereford; *The West Midlands*, pp. 159-64; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western Europe, 600-800*, pp. 60-66.

<sup>545</sup> D. Whitelock, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: 1930), no. XIX, pp. 54-7.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid, pp. 163-7n.

<sup>547</sup> R. Shoesmith, "St Guthlac's Priory Hereford," *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club, Herefordshire* 44, no. 3 (1984), p. 325.



Guthlac's estates at Pembridge, Bartestree, Bowley, Sutton, Little Cowarne, Avenbury, Maund and Moccas had been redistributed to laymen and, alongside the loss of some of its prebendaries to St Peter's (founded in 1084) and its unfavourable location during times of siege, it became essential for the community to move and merge with St Peter's.<sup>548</sup> Whatever its unfortunate position came to be, it is important to note that the Domesday survey records St Guthlac's as being in possession of lands at Brampton Abbots, Dormington, Hinton, Thinghill, Felton, Hope-under-Dinmore, Moccas, Almeley, Middlewood, Clifford and Whitney – a not unsubstantial arrangement of orbiting properties.<sup>549</sup> In addition, despite the loss of the infrastructure of the original site, the festival of St Guthlac has survived in the twelfth-century Hereford Missal, attesting to the continued importance of this saint even after the community had been uprooted and merged.<sup>550</sup>

More significant is a consideration of the possibilities how and why Hereford might have had an early community dedicated to St Guthlac in the first place. We know from Felix that Guthlac understood British speech, as an offhand remark by Felix explains that he is familiar with the dialect '*nam ille aliorum temporum praeteritis voluminibus inter illos exulabat*'.<sup>551</sup> Whitelock and Colgrave inferred from this episode that the young soldier Guthlac had once been engaged in defending the Mercian border from the Welsh, who Felix describes as combative during the reign of Cœnred.<sup>552</sup> Still, Hereford's role as a strategic military post, literally 'army-ford', along the border might contribute to our understanding of how the cult might have reached these western marches. One local historian has very rationally suggested that 'just as the Roman regiments drafted to Hadrian's Wall had brought their gods with them, so the Saxons brought to Hereford from the east the cult of this Saxon saint'.<sup>553</sup> While I think it unlikely that East Anglian soldiers had the influence or resources to set up a cult centre at Hereford, King Æthelbald and his *thegns* would have. Felix describes the visits of the future Mercian king and many of his *thegns* to Guthlac's hermitage whilst he was still alive and even once after his death, evidencing Guthlac's appeal for the nobility.<sup>554</sup> If it can be suggested that Æthelbald was as occupied at the Mercian border as his predecessors and successors, then could it not be possible that Mercian nobility/royalty desired a community dedicated to their king's saintly patron at a place where they were often stationed? For just as King Æthelwald of Northumbria invested Cedd with a community at Lastingham because he believed 'the daily prayers of those who served God there would greatly help him', so Hereford may have been similarly endowed by Æthelbald as a place

<sup>548</sup> St Peter's was given, alongside its brother church St Owen's, to St Peter's, Gloucester in 1101. The final straw occurred in 1140 when some of the bodies from St Guthlac's cemetery were disinterred and used as ammunition for siege engines during an attack. S.H. Martin, "St Guthlac's Priory and the City Churches," *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club, Herefordshire* 34 (1952-4), p. 221 and Shoesmith, "St Guthlac's Priory Hereford," p. 326.

<sup>549</sup> Martin, "St Guthlac's Priory and the City Churches," pp. 62-9.

<sup>550</sup> St Guthlac's feast was held on April 11<sup>th</sup>; Walter et al., eds., *The Hereford Breviary*, vol. II, *Henry Bradshaw Society* (London: 1911), pp. 140-1.

<sup>551</sup> VG, XXXIV.

<sup>552</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 3.

<sup>553</sup> Martin, "St Guthlac's Priory and the City Churches," p. 67.

<sup>554</sup> VG, XL-II, XLV, XLVII, XLIX; OEVG, XI, XIII, XVI, XVII, XIX.

where he could frequent and daily hear prayers directed towards his patron saint.<sup>555</sup> Indeed, archaeology at Bamburgh may reveal a similar closeness of castle and church, perhaps set up by Oswald for his bishop Aidan.<sup>556</sup> Though I think it unlikely that soldiers may have provided the momentum for setting up Hereford, it is possible that it provided some measure of comfort for armies to know that their king's patron was a victorious warrior-kinsman of both temporal and spiritual battles.

Hereford is certainly a most interesting dedication in that it may provide some insights into the contemporary appeal of St Guthlac. One interesting interpretation has been brought forth by Catherine Clarke, who has been interested in the later resonance of St Guthlac's legend with physical land reclamation taking place during the Benedictine period at Glastonbury, another west country abbey and candidate site for the production of the Exeter book. Glastonbury had an abbot in the ninth century named Guthlac who later got conflated with Crowland's hermit.<sup>557</sup> In her research, Clarke cogently argues that St Guthlac's own appropriation of demons' land can be viewed as a kind of cultivation of landscape in which monasteries, like Glastonbury, sought to develop wilderness into a delightful place.<sup>558</sup> While Clarke argues that spiritual cultivation is evident in a number of Anglo-Saxon hagiographical texts, she sees it as most evident in *Guthlac A* and therefore, strikingly endemic to sites which were connected with St Guthlac.

Glastonbury may have later possessed Guthlac relics of some kind after they were appropriated by abbot Henry of Blois (c.1126-71), yet she illuminates that the appeal of St Guthlac for Glastonbury more accurately represents the relevance this cult had in this place, during the Benedictine revival.<sup>559</sup> Her work has been strongly influenced by John Hines' work which argues that organization and exploitation of Crowland's landscape, as well as the associated economic factors, social implications, and subordinate beliefs 'inform *Guthlac A* from beginning to end', whether consciously or unconsciously, for a contemporary audience living through this phase.<sup>560</sup> Both Hines' and Clarke's conclusions are limited to *Guthlac A*'s appropriateness for a particular stage and place yet it would seem to be valuable to cast this approach more widely to include Hereford.

Hereford, like Glastonbury and Crowland, was founded on borderlands whether spiritual, political or physical. The Guthlac legend's themes of land reclamation on God's behalf,

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<sup>555</sup> *HE*, III.23; discussions of the uses of royal affiliations to monasteries have been treated at length by Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults*, pp. 250-1; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 114-29; Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London: 2003), pp. 17-46.

<sup>556</sup> Philip N. Wood, "Geophysical Survey at Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland," in *Notes and News: Archaeology Data Service* (Archaeology Data Service, 1999-2000).

<sup>557</sup> Carley, ed., *Cronica Glastoniensis*, pp. 344, 372.

<sup>558</sup> Clarke, "The Allegory of Landscape: Land Reclamation and Defence at Glastonbury Abbey," pp. 88-93. Her larger work on identifying the *locus amoenus* device and its uses in the development of the English nation is expanded upon in her book; Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400*.

<sup>559</sup> She draws attention to the contrast between the archaeological evidence for programs of land reclamation and defence and the insistence in local literature on an Eden-like landscape provided by God, requiring no labour. Clarke, "The Allegory of Landscape: Land Reclamation and Defence at Glastonbury Abbey," p. 93. Guthlac's relics were enumerated in Titus MS fol.11 of Carley, ed., *Cronica Glastoniensis*, p. 154.

<sup>560</sup> Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology*, pp. 62-70.

transformation of 'wilderness' into 'civilization', and steadfast opposition through battle might equally suit the development and purpose of St Guthlac's, Hereford, as they have the purpose and development of Crowland throughout various stages, and Glastonbury during the Benedictine period. The idea of the saint as a builder figures the Bible and other hagiographies, including Bede's reworking of the Cuthbert hagiography.<sup>561</sup> Moreover, we know from their themes and borrowings that both Felix and the *B* poet relied upon Bede as a model while *A* poet's portrayal of Guthlac as *bytla* in combination with language for settling and building foreshadows a transformation of his location from a *beorg* into a *haligne hám*.<sup>562</sup> So might St Guthlac's church, Hereford have interpreted its location or situation allegorically in relation to their heavenly patron's reclamation of uninhabitable land for God.

Furthermore, imagine the statement that a Guthlacian church dedication like Hereford must have signified for attackers and defenders alike when set along a border. Susan Ridyard has argued that the patronage and appropriation of Mercian and Anglian saints by West Saxon monarchs served to strengthen control over these areas.<sup>563</sup> Perhaps it is not unreasonable to consider Æthelbald's own likely introduction of St Guthlac to Hereford as exhibiting similar political ambitions towards the Mercian boundary. Indeed, patronage of both Crowland and Hereford could have served to define the breadth of a vast Mercian overlordship for those abutting it. What is certain at least about these theories is that there are a number of equally suitable motives for establishing St Guthlac's cult in Hereford.

While no hagiographical testimony survives to indicate Hereford's early relationships or founder(s), there are strong possibilities that St Guthlac's church was established fairly contemporaneously to St Guthlac's, Crowland, and that it was introduced to the west by Guthlac's royal devotee, Æthelbald. None of the other dedications or associated sites from the hagiography displays such a singular, and early, interest in St Guthlac other than Crowland. That Æthelbald must have played an important part in generating Guthlac's status can already be seen from his lifetime relationship with the saint, his post-mortem visit, and decoration of Guthlac's shrine.<sup>564</sup>

Certainly the later community at Crowland was intent on preserving the memory of this earliest royal affiliation through the fabrication of a foundation legend which would appear in the Norman era epitomes of the saint and chronicles of the abbey.<sup>565</sup> Guthlac's association to

<sup>561</sup> *VCM*, II. 396-98; *VCP*, XVII. From Ps. 83.1, 126.1; Mt. 5.14, 7.24. Sandra Duncan, "Signa De Caelo in the Lives of St Cuthbert," *Heythrop Journal* 41, no. 4 (2000); J. Mann, "Allegorical Buildings in Medieval Literature," *Medium Aevum* 63 (1994); Kirby, "Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the *Life of Wilfrid*," pp. 383-397.

<sup>562</sup> Especially *GA*, II. 148b-149; Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," pp. 282-7.

<sup>563</sup> Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults*, pp. 191, 240.

Also Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 154.

<sup>564</sup> Æthelbald or his retainers visit in *VG*, XL, XLII, XLV, XLIX, LII and is attributed with decorating the elevated shrine in LI.

<sup>565</sup> A charter dated 716 AD records that Æthelbald, king of Mercia, founded a monastery at Crowland, Lincs., (S 82). It appears in B.M. Arundel 178, fol. 29v-30; B.M. Lansdowne 207 c, fol. 96v-99; P.R.O., Conf. R. 1 Hen. VIII, pt. 2, no. 7; P.R.O. Pat. R. 17 Ric. II, pt. 1, m. 31, P.R.O. Pat. R. 1 Hen. IV, pt. 2, m.8; Oxford, All Souls College 32, fol. 1-2. This foundation legend was also recorded by Orderic Vitalis who says that he learned this fact from Ansgot the subprior; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 338-9.

Hereford was probably forgotten or overlooked after the death of Æthelbald, in the same way that it was at Repton. Indeed, while Crowland continued to emphasize a foundation from Æthelbald's time -a detail which Felix did not record- the Hereford Breviary, which is our sole surviving testament to Guthlacian devotions there does not confirm any relationship between Æthelbald and Guthlac, though it derived from Felix's *vita*! The community at Hereford may have persevered in its location close to the castle and in its dedication until Norman times, yet its purpose and function remain enigmatic due to the absence of any hagiography and history which would demonstrate the ancient appeal of St Guthlac for Æthelbald's border settlement.

The purpose of this section has been to consider the evidence which has put forth some sites as centres which had a marked interest in developing and promoting St Guthlac. This evidence has been taken by some to indicate that Lichfield, Repton or even important communities like Hereford provided the impetus for advertising and promoting the cult of St Guthlac because Crowland could not have been an important cult centre in this respect before the tenth century. However, it may simply be that we have to reevaluate our dismissal of Crowland's anomalous, but not isolated, development into a major cult centre after the tenth century. The next chapter will attempt to support Crowland's role as cult centre by reconsidering the models used in hagiographical variations of this cult in order to scrutinize their appeal and audience.

## Chapter IV

### THE MONASTIC BACKGROUND OF THE GUTHLAC DOSSIER

Despite the unlikelihood that Crowland was a monastery prior to the tenth century, the Guthlacian materials that were produced before this time still reference the monastic context in which they were created, copied and preserved. The historiography concerning the provenance of the Guthlac dossier has already been treated, though a discussion of its sources and their appeal at that juncture was not. An examination here of the sources, style, language and treatment will serve to identify what elements of these materials ensured the suitability, relevance and ultimately, the longevity of the Guthlac dossier for its monastic audience. Once a Benedictine community was transplanted onto Crowland's fens, it initiated new phases in the development of the cult and its legend that have unfortunately only survived from twelfth century and subsequent forms. Nevertheless, it is a defining feature of the materials which were produced after the mid-tenth century that they were created at Crowland to advertise its cult and community. Examination of Crowland's Guthlacian materials, grouped here as Norman developments and the Longchamp revival, indicate the influence that subsequent changes at Crowland had on the development of the Guthlac legend. It then becomes possible to juxtapose later materials against earlier ones in order to identify successive adaptations and their effect on the overall success of this cult. Each phase will be considered here though emphasis will be placed on the textual elements of the Guthlac dossier rather than the visual representations due to the obvious narrative limitations of these items.

#### The Origins

Felix's sources reflect his awareness of not only centuries of hagiographical conventions and their use by contemporary hagiographers, but the particular appropriateness of certain texts for their resonance to the Guthlac narrative. They include Bede's metrical and prose *Lives* of St Cuthbert, Evagrius' version of the *Vita Antonii*, Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* and other writings on that saint, Gregory's *Moralia in Job* and Book 2 from his *Dialogi*, the *Vita Fursei*, and Virgil's *Aeneid* in addition to the treatises *De Virginitate* and other works of Aldhelm. Use of these sources allowed Felix to illuminate how Guthlac's narrative corresponded to the well-defined tradition of sanctity depicted in these texts. And as such, they allow us to appreciate Felix's own capabilities and intentions for the Guthlac narrative. Colgrave's edition of Felix's *vita* compiled and identified most of the borrowings discussed in this thesis although his conclusions regarding

Felix's sources did not identify any significance to his choices, owing to the regular use of these texts in other contemporary Anglo-Saxon hagiographies.<sup>566</sup>

This left an opening for divergent theories to develop concerning the weight accorded certain sources in Felix's *vita* and how these might indicate what was considered suitable by Felix for his subject. Kurtz proposed that Felix hearkened back to the *Life of St Anthony*, using Evagrius' Latin translation as its primary model while Thacker's thesis contrastingly emphasized Felix's uses of Bede's *Vita Cuthberti* to argue that the *Vita Guthlaci* was not different in kind from the other contemporary hagiographies.<sup>567</sup> These two divergent studies were the first to recognize Felix's *vita* as a work which develops its material in a particularly unique way. However, while Kurtz' theory affords keen observations on Felix's unique application of the *Vita Antonii*, it fails to really account for the major influence of other sources. Other recent contributions, by Ciccarese most notably, have drawn out previously underestimated influences upon this text.<sup>568</sup> The result is a developing historiography that provides many excellent source studies which recognize Felix's extensive range of sources and talent for integration. This section will begin by first reconsidering Felix's sources and their historiography. This will then make possible a reconsideration of the function and audience of Felix's *Vita Guthlaci*, by aiming to demonstrate how these models indicate the ways Felix made his narrative suitable for its monastic audience.

The most obvious model for Felix to have used was Athanasius' *Vita Antonii* in Evagrius' Latin translation because it likewise relates the life of a saintly-hermit.<sup>569</sup> Felix identifies that he is borrowing directly from Evagrius' text initially in the prologue yet Kurtz was the first to argue that there is 'indubitable evidence of conscious copying' by Felix of entire sections and use of the *Vita Antonii* as a model for sentence patterns within the narrative itself.<sup>570</sup> His argument, based as it is on verbal echoes and some direct quotations, is not to be accepted without reservations. Therefore, we will begin by reconsidering the evidence he uses to support his theory in light of Felix's other sources.

Kurtz noted that the similarities between Anthony and Guthlac first appear in descriptions of their upbringing and early careers. Both are described as set apart in their youths, neither played silly games nor listened to foolish tales, though Felix later contradicts this statement when he relates how Guthlac was influenced by heroic tales to take up arms.<sup>571</sup> Kurtz also identifies

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<sup>566</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 17

<sup>567</sup> Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac;" Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 279-328.

<sup>568</sup> Maria Pia Ciccarese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice," *Studi Storico-religiosi* VI, no. 1-2 (1982).

<sup>569</sup> Use of the *Vita Antonii* has been identified by Colgrave as used by both the Anonymous monk of Lindisfarne and Bede in their *Lives* of St Cuthbert. For instance, *AVC*, prologue and *BMVC*, XXXVII; Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives*, pp. 60-3, 270-81, 310-1n, 354-7n. Interestingly, Colgrave considered the Anonymous Whitby hagiographer not to have been influenced by this source, Bertram Colgrave, ed., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*, 2007 reprint ed. (Cambridge: 1968), pp. 48-9, 140 n.1. Also Thacker, "Thesis," p. 301.

<sup>570</sup> VG, Prologue records '*Quoniam igitur exegisti a me, ut de sancti Guthlac conversatione tibi scriberem, quemadmodum coeperit, quidve ante propositum sanctum fuerit, vel qualem vitae terminum habuerit...*'; Also Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 103-5.

<sup>571</sup> VG, XII-XV are compared in *Ibid*, pp. 105-7. Guthlac's change in disposition occurs in VG, XVI and following.

that Guthlac's virtues as a monk were styled upon a list of Anthony's.<sup>572</sup> Unfortunately, Colgrave confirms that the only direct borrowing is the phrase *alterius patientiam*, which displays significantly fewer verbal similarities than the extensive list of ideal monastic traits directly transplanted from the *Life of St Fursa* in the two proceeding chapters.<sup>573</sup> Guthlac's similarities to Anthony have been more prominently highlighted by Kurtz once Guthlac decides to become a hermit. Anthony, like Guthlac, is described by his hagiographer as unfulfilled by community living and burning with a desire to live in the wilderness.<sup>574</sup> Felix could have borrowed from Evagrius' chapters forty-nine and fifty when describing Anthony's own unfamiliarity with his chosen area of desert, his need to be led there by someone else, and his love of the spot once he had arrived though there are no direct verbal parallels identified.<sup>575</sup> Nor does Felix draw attention to Anthony's similar estrangement from his own beloved sister.<sup>576</sup> Even so, Felix's statement that Guthlac became interested in the wilderness after 'hearing tales of the Desert Fathers' implies that Felix wanted his audience to think that Guthlac had been influenced by Anthony's *vita*, amongst others.<sup>577</sup> Readings on saints like the Desert Fathers figured not only in the Matins conducted on their Feast Days but were also read in the refectory during meal times, after Compline, and privately, particularly during the Lenten period.<sup>578</sup> The very fact that Guthlac is described as inhabiting a *tumulus* in the Fens is noteworthy, Kurtz pointed out, because it was reminiscent of Anthony's hermitages, the first of which was in a tomb not far from his previous settlement.<sup>579</sup> This similitude may have reflected the actual geography of Crowland as well since the previous chapter illuminated how Felix's descriptions of Guthlac's hermitage may have been accurate, making it possible in this line of reasoning, that Crowland was chosen for its resemblance to what a prospective hermit had learned from the Desert Fathers' exempla.<sup>580</sup>

The most pronounced resemblances between Anthony and Guthlac occurred during Guthlac's years at Crowland. As evidence, he proposes that the nature and order of the demonic assaults upon Guthlac follow those set out by Anthony in his sermon and by the progression of trials recorded in his *vita*.<sup>581</sup> So when Felix writes that Guthlac was first tempted to despair over his past sins and current isolation, Kurtz identifies that Anthony's first temptation was the same

<sup>572</sup> VG, XXIII; Ibid, pp. 105-6.

<sup>573</sup> VG, XXI-II; identified by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 84. Thacker also suggests that the list of virtues is similar to Jerome's *Life of St Anthony* and the *Regula Monachorum* of Columbanus, Thacker, "Thesis," p. 288.

<sup>574</sup> VG, XXIV. Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 106-7.

<sup>575</sup> VA, III, VIII, XI, XII; VG, XXV; VG, XXIV, XXV, XXVI. Paul also fell in love with his hermitage; VP, VI; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 295-6.

<sup>576</sup> VG, L and VA, 2, 3.

<sup>577</sup> *Cum enim priscorum monachorum solitariam vitam legebat, tum inluminato cordis gremio avida cupidine heremum quaerere fervebat*; VG, XXIV. Thacker argues that Felix's statement in the plural shows that he was aware of the existence of the *lives* of other hermits and gives source and manuscript evidence for the existence of these texts in ninth-century Mercia; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 291-5 as does Kurtz, with evidence from Aldhelm, whom Felix emulated; Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 106-7, n.7. Sulpicius Severus similarly describes Martin's hermitage, also found at a bend in the river, as desert-like; VM, X.3-4.

<sup>578</sup> Ester de Waal, ed., *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 2003 ed. (Leominster: 1990).

<sup>579</sup> VA, VIII, XI, XII, XLIX; Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 106-7.

<sup>580</sup> Especially VG, XXVIII.

<sup>581</sup> Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 108-16.

and that he sang the same song to celebrate his first victory; Psalm 118.VII.<sup>582</sup> In Anthony's *vita*, the demons then tempt the hermit to lust though Kurtz explains that Felix, 'with chaste ambiguity and a truly Victorian reticence', merely records that Guthlac was disturbed by 'evil desires' before a monstrous *mêlée* dragged him through muddy water and briars and beat him with iron whips; all punishments which solitaries historically self-employed to quench lustful thoughts.<sup>583</sup> Finally, Kurtz considers the chapters that describe the phantom army and the invading animals to be visualizations of the fear tactics described as the final attack in the *Vita Antonii*.<sup>584</sup> That the demons will first provoke the hermit to despair, lust, and then fear is the structural order that Kurtz perceives in both *vitae* even though he concedes that the most defining episode of the Guthlac narrative, the vision of Hell, was not modelled upon anything in the *Vita Antonii*.

Without a doubt certain aspects of Felix's demonology, especially the cacophonous animal hoard and the demons' proclivity for teeth-gnashing and weeping when defeated, were derived either first hand or from later hagiographical mimicry of Anthony's own encounters with demons. And Kurtz considers Guthlac's spiritual armaments, in the words of Paul's letter to Ephesians 6.XI-VII, his use of the sign of the cross, and singing Psalms 118.VII-X, 37.XII, or 67.II to ward off demons and despair derivative of Anthony's own defences though these reactions and their accompanying biblical explanations were similarly used in a number of other hagiographies which Colgrave has shown Felix used.<sup>585</sup> Nevertheless, Guthlac and Anthony's newfound abilities to perform miracles, give prophecies and display power over wild creatures demonstrate the spiritual majority that each has attained as a result of their steadfast discipline and victory over their own demons. Evagrius' translation of Athanasius' *Life of St Anthony* was an influential hagiographical model and an inspiration to those desirous of applying ascetic principles to their practice of Christianity. Its use by Felix indicates that he wished his audience to be doubly clear of the similarities between the two saints, of the comparable merits of his own subject, and the asceticism which a monastic audience should recognize as the highest attainable level of spiritual perfection.

While Kurtz' seminal article invaluable highlighted the narrative similarities and likenesses between the hagiographical characters of Guthlac and Anthony, it displays faulty reasoning for Kurtz to have proposed an Antonine source for every detail and event in Guthlac's *vita*, especially since Felix made significant linguistic borrowings and imitated a number of other texts. The chapter on Felix's *vita* in Alan Thacker's thesis, 'The Social and Continental Background to Early Anglo-Saxon Hagiography', challenged Kurtz' theory by arguing that the overall development of Felix's *life*, some episodes and details were more indebted to contemporary Anglo-Saxon

<sup>582</sup> VG, XXIX; VA, VI; Ibid, p. 112 and Ciccarese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice," pp. 136-7.

<sup>583</sup> By way of an example, Kurtz cites St Benedict's infamous roll in nettles and briars to overcome lustful thoughts; Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 112-3. VG, XXXI; VA, V, VIII.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid, pp. 114-6.

<sup>585</sup> Some examples are St Martin's use of Psalm 118.VII to ward off demons; White, ed., *Early Christian Lives*, V.6, p. 138 and Bede's use of Ephesians 6. XVI-II to describe Cuthbert's spiritual armaments; Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives*, pp. 214-5.



hagiography than the *Vita Antonii*, nor did this text 'hark back to the spirit of the ancient world in a unique way'.<sup>586</sup> Because Thacker discusses the sources and contexts of the other prominent Anglo-Saxon hagiographies in his other chapters, he is able to establish a stronger case for contemporary features and borrowings than Kurtz made allowance for.

To begin with, he disputes that Kurtz was wrong in comparing Anthony's and Guthlac's conversions, as Guthlac was clearly predestined from birth while Anthony's determination and perseverance reflect his conscious decision to strive for holiness.<sup>587</sup> This difference also accounts for the odd juxtaposition of Guthlac's plundering and return donation by ensuring that Felix's audience is reminded of Guthlac's predestination throughout the pre-conversion chapters. Indeed, Thacker rightly points out that Felix's description of Guthlac's conversion was much 'less Antonian' than Bede's conversion of St Cuthbert, which transformed all the Anonymous monk of Lindisfarne's references to Cuthbert's predestination instead into episodes that demonstrate a developing holiness.<sup>588</sup>

Even more prominent is Thacker's reconsideration of the sources for Guthlac's miraculous healings and triumphs over devils. The structure is such that no miracles occur until Guthlac has attained spiritual majority and then his ability to cure the sick was realized, Thacker points out, through prayer combined with ritual actions such as breathing on or wrapping the patient in an article of clothing.<sup>589</sup> Anthony was never described as combining these processes though he occasionally used the sign of the cross to ward off demons.<sup>590</sup> He also argues that Guthlac's battles were not purely psychological in nature; that they were envisioned by Felix in physical, even militaristic terminology and were capable of causing very real physical pain in addition to mental anguish.<sup>591</sup> While Guthlac's struggles are not markedly different from those described by Anthony's hagiographers, Thacker presents other contemporary examples of the use of Antonian demonology in order to show that the *Vita Guthlaci* was not unique in its visualization. For instance, he considers the episode in which Guthlac perceives that his dwellings are on fire was common to a number of other hagiographies.<sup>592</sup> So too does he consider demonic attacks in beastly forms and the temptation to unreasonably fast hagiographical motifs that were common by the 740s and well-known amongst monastic audiences.<sup>593</sup>

In fact, when we reconsider the episode when Guthlac was disturbed from his night-time vigil by demons in the shapes of a lion, bull, bear, serpent, boar, wolf, horse, stag, serpent, ox

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<sup>586</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," p. 284.

<sup>587</sup> VG, IV-XV; VA, I-III; Ibid, p. 284 contra Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," p. 105.

<sup>588</sup> AVC, I.3-7; BVC, I-V; Thacker, "Thesis," p. 285 citing Schutt, "Vom Heiligen Antonius Zum Heiligen Guthlac," pp. 86-8.

<sup>589</sup> For example, VG, XLI, XLII, XLV. Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 116-8; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 290-1. Thacker wonders whether the structural progression towards spiritual majority might also coincidentally reflect Guthlac's background.

<sup>590</sup> VG, XLI-XLII, XLV, LIII; VA, XIV, XXIV, XXIX, XXX, XXXV, XXXVI; Thacker, "Thesis," p. 284 citing Schutt, "Vom Heiligen Antonius Zum Heiligen Guthlac," p. 79.

<sup>591</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 286-7 contra Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 111-5, 128, 141.

<sup>592</sup> VW, 1; AVC, II.6; BVCP, XIII; Anonymous *Vita Brigittae*, V; Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, II.10; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 286-7.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid, pp. 288-90.

and raven, we see very little direct quotation in evidence. There are of course, the obvious substitutions to the assortment of beasts described in the Antonian *vita*: the boar, stag, ox and raven were animals which would have been more symbolically relevant to an Anglo-Saxon audience.<sup>594</sup> However, for a passage that constitutes such a substantial portion of Kurtz' evidence, there are only a total of eight words that have been identified as linguistic borrowings. Felix may have copied the audible words (*sonitu*, *horris*-, and *voc*-) and the words for lion, bear, and the actions evidenced by the bellowing (*mugit*-) and horns (*corn*-) of the bull from Evagrius though half of these words also form part of the passage in Virgil's *Aeneid* from which Colgrave has identified that Felix borrowed the phrase *squamea colla*.<sup>595</sup> In some respects this vision might be one of the most suggestive imitations of the *Life of St Anthony* while in other respects, the introduction of new animals and amalgamation of other literary sources may show Felix's intention to develop the Antonian material he did borrow to better suit current tastes and interests.

Nor was that the only instance where Kurtz attributes a Guthlacian episode to an Antonian source while disregarding the integration of other sources into the same episode. In chapter XXIX, Felix relates Guthlac's first temptation in which the foe encourages Guthlac to remember past wrongs and to despair so that for three days 'he does not know where to turn'.<sup>596</sup> While it is not explicitly disclosed what sins Guthlac was forced to remember, Felix's use of a quotation from the *Life of Paul* here may give us more of an indication. The original context of the phrase *quo se verteret, nesciebat*, identified by Colgrave as derived from Jerome's *Life of Paul*, describes the sufferings of a martyr who did not know where to turn when reluctantly seduced by a prostitute.<sup>597</sup> Could it be that Felix was alluding that Guthlac suffered pangs of lust by borrowing language from this episode? It seems possible, considering what Felix relates of Guthlac's pre-conversion marauding. Certainly Kurtz came to the same conclusions regarding Felix's allusions in this passage though again here, he disregarded the influence of Jerome's *vita*. Paul the hermit would have been just as relevant an exemplar as Anthony making it not surprising that Colgrave identified passages that were both modelled and contain language from Jerome's *vita*, particularly

<sup>594</sup> Representations of stag and boar have been found on armory recovered from Sutton Hoo and the recent Staffordshire Hoard suggesting that these animals were considered male symbols of strength, prowess, honour or nobility (A horned god, Cerunnunos or Lord of the Animals, was both god of war and fertility). Literary references include the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*, where Cú Chulainn was followed by a stag when he returned home with the heads of his three enemies (cf. Edel, *The Celtic West and Europe: Studies in Celtic Literature and the Early Irish Church*, p. 199) and Adomnán's *Vita Sancti Columbae* which tells how the saint once killed a boar by his command (Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (London: 1995), II.26). Oxen were referred to in *AVC*, II.4 (citing 1 Timothy V) and a demon once boasted to St Martin that he has used an oxen's horn to gouge one of Martin's peasant's fatally in the groin; *F.R. Hoare, ed., The Life of St Martin of Tours, The Western Fathers: Being the Lives of Sts. Martin of Tours, Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo, Honoratus of Arles and Germanus of Auxerre* (London: 1954), XXI. Ravens are the most prevalent: Odin has two ravens that work as spies, Elijah and Paul the hermit are brought food in the desert by ravens and Morrigan, the goddess of battle, is symbolized by a raven. Cuthbert, Columbanus and Guthlac were all plagued by mischievous ravens; *AVC*, III.5; *BVC*, XX; *VColumbani*, I.15; *VG*, XXXVII. For further discussion of the sources of animal miracles in Anglo-Saxon hagiography see Meredith Bacola, "*Animalia Maritima in Harenam: A Typology of Irish Asceticism in the Lives of St. Cuthbert*" submitted for the M.A., History Department, Durham University (2005).

<sup>595</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 114 and *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*. 10th edition ed., II vols., vol. I (Cambridge: 2006).

<sup>596</sup> *VG*, XXIX; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 94-8.

<sup>597</sup> Hieronymus, *Vita Sancti Pauli*, III; White, ed., *Early Christian Lives*, p.76.

passages which relate aspects of Paul's diet, clothing, and daily routine that would have been germane to Guthlac's asceticism and his audience's perception of it.<sup>598</sup>

Thacker instead proposed that Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti* influenced the structure, narrative and language of Felix's *vita* more than the Evagrius, even citing several examples of how Cuthbert's time on Farne was alluded to over similar material in the *Vita Antonii*. For instance, both Cuthbert and Guthlac were told of the many places where it is possible for a man to isolate himself with God and they both chose a place that was deemed uninhabitable because of demons.<sup>599</sup> Even the phrase *antiquus hostis* could have come from Bede or even from common contemporary usage.<sup>600</sup> In fact, Guthlac's spiritual defence against these demons, in terms described in Eph. VI.11-7, cannot solely be attributed to the *vitae* of Anthony or even Paul as Felix could just as likely have borrowed this phrase from Bede.<sup>601</sup> Demons serve an important function in both *vitae* and their disappearance following defeat indicates that Cuthbert and Guthlac have achieved spiritual majority and are able to perform miracles. Moreover, both saints are also granted the comfort of sight and speech with an angel in their isolation, mentioned early in both *vitae* though only revealed to a witness on their deathbed.<sup>602</sup> In this way Felix and Bede adhere to the same method of inquiry, as set out in their prologues, to name their witnesses and reveal a reliable source of their information about the saint.

More striking similarities can be noted after Guthlac obtains spiritual majority, especially in his powers over nature. Bede explains that 'if a man faithfully and wholeheartedly serves the Maker of all created things, it is no wonder that all creation should minister to his commands and wishes'.<sup>603</sup> Cuthbert's faith enables him to extinguish a fire, produce water from dry land, command the respect of birds, and have powers over the sea so it is expected that following this linguistic borrowing, we recognize similar abilities in Guthlac.<sup>604</sup> In one episode, Felix explains how a witness observed how swallows came to Guthlac so that he might show the birds where to build their nests as 'they did not presume to choose a nesting place without the permission of the man of God; and each year they came and sought from the man of God a sign to tell them where they were to dwell'.<sup>605</sup> There are striking parallels in this description to Bede's Metrical *Life of St Cuthbert*, which Colgrave has already shown Felix borrowed from.<sup>606</sup> Indeed, this particular episode may show that Felix even had a particular version of the Metrical *Life* at hand; a version

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<sup>598</sup> VG, XXVII, XXVIII, XXXVII, L; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 90, 94, 96, 116, 154. Martin was also described as wearing skins; VM, X.2; Thacker, "Thesis," p. 303.

<sup>599</sup> BVCPr, XVII; Ciccurese, "Osservazione Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* di Felice," p. 137, n. Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 311-3.

<sup>600</sup> Also *hostis insidias*; von Jaeger, ed., *Bede's Metrische Vita Sancta Cuthberti*, p. 93; *turma(ba) hoste(is)*; BVCPr, XVII and *antiquus hostis*; VG, XXIX and BVCPr, XXII. Thacker also identified that demons were also described as *antiquus hostis* in the *Vita Columbani*, 1.3 and the *Vita Columbae*, 110a-111a; Thacker, "Thesis," p. 316.

<sup>601</sup> BVCPr, XVII; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 311-12.

<sup>602</sup> VG, L; BVCPr, VII.

<sup>603</sup> 'Nam qui auctori omnium creaturarum fideliter et integro spiritu famulatur, non est mirandum, si eius imperiis ac votis omnis creature deserviat.' VG, XXVIII; translation by Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 121.

<sup>604</sup> BVCPr, XVIII-XXI.

<sup>605</sup> 'non enim sine licita volentia viri Dei locum nidificandi sibi eligere praesumebant, sed in unoquoque anno, petentes mansionis indicium, ad virum Dei veniebant.' VG, XXXIX.

<sup>606</sup> For example, Colgrave cites that Felix used language from BVCPr in his prologue; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 60.

which contains a miracle story in which the seals of Farne seek permission from Cuthbert before giving birth.<sup>607</sup> Equally suggestive are the miracle stories relating how Cuthbert and Guthlac had to endure the mischief (*nequitiam*) of crows who steal a document on one occasion and a visitor's gloves on another.<sup>608</sup> Cuthbert's interactions involve stopping the birds from devouring his garden and from dismantling his roof thatch; neither of which appear to have been used by Felix though Colgrave identified that Bede borrowed from Anthony's reprimand to the animals in his garden in the former episode.<sup>609</sup> The episode involving the stolen gloves, on the other hand, was likened by Thacker to Columbanus' identical retrieval of a stolen glove from a crow, described in the *vita* by Jonas of Bobbio.<sup>610</sup> The thieving raven described by Felix, however, damages the item; a detail much more reminiscent of the bird's behaviour in the scene described by Bede. Consequently, the miracle stories relating crows' propensity for theft appear to be a particularly insular motif, one whose specifics suggest that they were influenced by Felix's careful reading of Bede. The episodes which testify to Guthlac's powers over nature, granted once he has obtained spiritual majority, have much more in common with Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti* and current hagiographical tastes than they do with episodes found in the *vitae* of ancient hermits.

Prophecy and healing were the other means by which Guthlac exhibited spiritual majority and these abilities too, Thacker argues, were influenced primarily by Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti*. Felix tells how Guthlac began 'to predict the future and to narrate absent things to those who were present' using almost exactly the same phrase used to describe Cuthbert's abilities in Bede's prose *vita*.<sup>611</sup> In fact, Colgrave's edition identifies Bede's borrowings in over half of the chapters between XL and LII; episodes which relate Guthlac's miraculous prophetic and healing abilities, his final illness, death, and the recovery of his uncorrupted body.<sup>612</sup> Nevertheless, Felix expands or develops many of the details, perhaps to give greater insight into his subject.<sup>613</sup> For example, Guthlac heals one of Æthelbald's *gesiths* by wrapping him in his girdle which protected the wearer from demonic attacks for the rest of his life.<sup>614</sup> In Bede's *vita*, Cuthbert heals his abbess-friend Ælflæd from an affliction that she worries will be life-long by sending her his linen

<sup>607</sup> 'Quid referam vitulas foetus sub fasce gravitas/ Non ausas illic uteri deponere pondus/ Ni prius ipse sacra dextra permetteret illis?/ Quarum illi patrium servit cum fluctibus aequor', *BVCM*, XXI of the Besançon MS; Lapidge, "Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*," pp. 80-4. Besançon MS 186 redaction is argued by Lapidge's article to be an earlier draft of the *BVCM*, written by the year 705.

<sup>608</sup> *BVCPr.*, XX; *VG* XXXVII-VIII, XL. The only other hagiographical source used by Felix which describes an interaction with a crow is Jerome's *Vita Pauli* however the crow in that episode is more helpful than hindering as it steals poisoned food so that Paul does not eat it; *VP*, X.

<sup>609</sup> *BVCPr.*, XIX, XX. Bede clearly expanded upon III.5 of the Anonymous *vita* which describes how Cuthbert, while growing his own food in the model of St Benedict, reprimanded two crows for stealing his roof thatch to create two separate chapters with distinct hagiographical allusions.

<sup>610</sup> *VColumbani*, I. 15, Jonas of Bobbio, *Life of St Columban*, ed. Dana Carleton Munro (Fleinfach: 1993), pp. 71-2; noted by Thacker, "Thesis", p. 310.

<sup>611</sup> 'Coepit etiam inter ista vir Dei Guthlac prophetiae spiritu pollere, future praedicere, praesentibus absentia narrare.' *VG*, XLIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 126-31; *BVCPr.*, XI; *Dialogi*, II.

<sup>612</sup> *VG*, XLIII, XLV, XCLVIII, XLIX, L, LI, LII; *Ibid*, pp. 189 n.XLV, 191 n.XLVIII, 192n.L, 194 n.LI.

<sup>613</sup> See also Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 311-2 and Ciccarese's study which concludes that Felix showed originality in his fusion of old forms, models and new elements; Ciccarese, "Osservazione Sulle Fonti E Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice," pp. 137-8, 137 n.10.

<sup>614</sup> *VG*, XLII.

girdle. She then reuses the girdle to cure other believers.<sup>615</sup> Felix transforms Ælflæd's uncertainty over her condition into the certainty of everlasting protection for Ecga, emphasizing the concept of 'lifelong' and the saint's direct role in effecting the miracle by having Guthlac tie the girdle on. In another miracle story which describes how another *gesith* is healed through touching Guthlac's garment, Felix transposes Bede's statement that the fame of Cuthbert's miracles spread into even the most remote parts of Britain.<sup>616</sup> His use of this phrase expands it to specify that not only did 'abbots, brethren, *gesithas*, rich men, the afflicted and the poor' come to visit Guthlac, but also those from the neighbouring land of the Mercians and further afield.<sup>617</sup> Thus Felix's alteration of Bede's statement identifies Guthlac's similarities to Cuthbert while punctuating Guthlac's greater accessibility to all social levels. In these examples, we can see how Felix modified Bede's model to make his subject appear the equal if not the better of Cuthbert.

Nonetheless, no other section of Felix's *vita* corresponds as closely to Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti* as Guthlac's final illness, death, and the recovery of his uncorrupted remains.<sup>618</sup> This identifies that Felix considered it essential for Guthlac to have followed Bede's conventions at this point. Therefore it is not surprising to note that an abbess Ecgburh sends Guthlac a shroud and coffin when she enquires who will succeed him at Crowland after his death.<sup>619</sup> Felix transplants '*alio tempore reverentissimo virgo virginum Christi meriteretur...rogaverat*' into the opening lines of this chapter so that we are reminded of Ælflæd asking Cuthbert at a meeting on Coquet island whether he will take the seat of bishop and for how long her brother Ecgfrith will rule.<sup>620</sup> Cuthbert is also supplied with his shroud by an abbess, Verca, though abbot Cudda provided the lead coffin, showing another example of how Felix amalgamated his Bedan source.<sup>621</sup> The narrative progresses to include not only the final trials endured by the long-suffering saint, but also his own prophetic understanding of how much time is left. Cuthbert allows himself some time alone to wrestle with his demons, and then divulges to an attendant the directions for his burial and his secret relationship with an angel. Guthlac's death figures in this pattern so much so that when he dies, he too receives communion only moments before he raises his hands and expires. Immediately following death, both saints' emit a sweet smell which confirms their sanctity for the death-bed attendant whose responsibility it is to travel by boat to inform the brethren at Lindisfarne or the saint's sister respectively. Yet Felix also contributes new material to this pattern by establishing a disciple-teacher relationship between Guthlac and his attendant so that

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<sup>615</sup> *BVCPr.*, XXIII.

<sup>616</sup> *VG*, XLV ; *BVCPr.*, XXII. Kurtz concedes that there is no parallel in Anthony of this line but sees a verbal echo in what follows; Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 118-20.

<sup>617</sup> '*...multi diversorum ordinum gradus, abates, fraters, comites, divites, vexati, paupers, non solum de proximis Merciorum finibus, verum etiam de remotis Brittanniae partibus...*' *VG*, XLV ; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 138-41.

<sup>618</sup> *VG*, L ; *BVCPr.*, XXXVII-XL. See also Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 311-2 and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 192-3.

<sup>619</sup> *VG*, XLVIII.

<sup>620</sup> *BVCPr.*, XXIV.

<sup>621</sup> *BVCPr.*, XXXVII.

his audience is faced with a more emotional passing, witnessed through the grief of others.<sup>622</sup> After his exposition on loss, Felix again looks to Bede's descriptions and to Sulpicius Severus' exclamatory verses on St Martin to augment the exhumation of Guthlac's uncorrupted remains and their elevation to a more prominent location in Crowland's oratory.<sup>623</sup> Felix creates a work which lauds his subject as Cuthbert's equal but desperately so; his Guthlac is portrayed as the friend and help-meet of a broad spectrum of people who were overlooked or under-emphasized by Bede and he was precipitously exhumed to reach parity sooner. Even the chapter relating Æthelbald's visit to Guthlac's tomb and subsequent vision of the saint, likewise referencing Bede's use of Psalm 31 which promises aid to those who trust in God, trumps Cuthbert's prophecies by recording how Guthlac interceded to ensure a royal succession.<sup>624</sup>

When Kurtz underestimates Felix's borrowings from Cuthbert's death scene as merely 'parts of speeches as well as descriptive and narrative phrases', he fails to see the forest for its trees.<sup>625</sup> The Bedan echoes, direct quotations, structure and detail which saturate Guthlac's death and elevation ensure that an audience was reminded of Cuthbert and the requisite accoutrements expected by his contemporary Anglo-Saxon audience. This level of imitation substantiates that Felix sought not only to model particular episodes after St Cuthbert but to align the narrative and the overall shape of his *vita* on Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti* for his contemporary, native audience. That Felix was not able to mirror his Bedan model throughout must have been due to both the divergent career of Cuthbert once he left the Farne islands and to the convention of utilizing various biblical and hagiographical sources to promote sanctity through comparison and continuity. Even then, it is clear that Felix altered and inserted new material in order preserve the originality and dynamism of his subject. Thacker's suggestion that Felix relied upon the Evagrius because it was quite simply the only *vita* of a hermit-saint which he knew gains further weight when we consider that almost all Felix's other sources, as identified by Colgrave, describe saints with pastoral obligations, who either headed, or belonged to monastic communities.<sup>626</sup> Felix's use of the *Vita Antonii* and Kurtz' perceived importance of it as a source reflects the importance of harmonizing a hermit-visionary model with the existing oral traditions about St Guthlac.

In addition to his dispute of Kurtz' thesis, Thacker also acknowledged the significant influence of visionary literature upon the *Vita Guthlaci*. Prior to him, it was generally thought that Felix must have had knowledge of the *Vita Fursei* because he too described a vision of Hell, though this influence was never pursued any further.<sup>627</sup> Certainly, Fursa's *vita* was the most

<sup>622</sup> Earlier in his *vita*, Felix describes a miracle story in which Becel is encouraged by the devil to kill Guthlac; VG, XXXV. In chapter L, it is also recorded that '*Habitabat ergo cum eo sub illo tempore...*' Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 152.

<sup>623</sup> VG, LI; *BVCPr.*, XLII ; VM, XXV.6, XXVII.1-2.; *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>624</sup> VG, LII; *BVCPr.*, XXII.

<sup>625</sup> Kurtz concedes that Felix drew 'later most often from Bede.' "St Anthony to St Guthlac," p. 126.

<sup>626</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," p. 301. An exception would be Felix's use of Virgil's *Aeneid* which will be explored later. Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 16-7.

<sup>627</sup> For example, Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," p. 113 and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 17.

famous though not the only contemporary visionary account available to Felix, though Fursa's own noble descent, his ties with East Anglia, and his similarly uncorrupted corpse could have recommended its use.<sup>628</sup> What is more, Colgrave identified that Felix had borrowed descriptions of Fursa's disposition and early life in the monastery in the chapters describing Guthlac's time at Repton, proving that Felix knew this text.<sup>629</sup> Thacker draws parallels to the fact that both Guthlac and Fursa experienced visions because of their sins but also in the terminology used to describe their experiences; the *horridi alarum stridores* which carry Guthlac away seem similar to the *nivea...penna* of Fursa's transporting angels; the *nubifera...spatia* and *fuscis atrarum nubium caliginibus nigrescere* of Guthlac's hell like Fursa's *nigra nubis*.<sup>630</sup> He also suggests that the deformities of Guthlac's demons were physically developed and enhanced from descriptions in the *Vita Fursei*.<sup>631</sup> There are of course some marked differences, for Fursa is tested in the fires for his sins while Guthlac, like the protagonist of the continental *Visio Baronti*, is rescued by his spiritual guide, nevertheless both saints are returned to the world accompanied by heavenly choirs singing Psalm 83.VIII.<sup>632</sup> While Thacker aligned Guthlac's vision of hell to insular exemplars like the *Vita Fursei*, he also acknowledged that similar visionary material found in the New Testament Apocrypha, the *Apocalypse of St Peter*, the *Vision of St Paul*, Gregory's *Dialogues* and Evagrius' *Vita Antonii* ensured the suitable reception of similar material in this hermit *vita*. Indeed, Thacker suggests that descriptions of Bartholomew's arrival appear very similar to descriptions of the merciful angels in the *Visio Pauli*; a text which Old English scholars had already considered to have influenced the Exeter book poems on this saint.<sup>633</sup>

After Thacker, and apparently independently of his thesis, Maria Pia Ciccacese published her own '*Osservazione sulle fonti e modelli della Vita Guthlaci*' in 1982 which also challenged Kurtz' theory through reconsidering the direct influence of the *Vita Fursei*. Ciccacese perceives that Felix's *vita* was unique from other contemporary saints' *lives* in three main aspects: the descriptions of demonic attacks and diabolic temptations, the use of St Anthony as a model and Guthlac's vision of the Underworld, which she argues was modelled upon chapter VIII of the *Vita*

<sup>628</sup> Guthlac's birth was heralded by a red-gold hand descending from the heavens to mark his door while Fursa also experienced hands descending from the heavens (here the hands of angels) during a time of great sickness; VF, I, VG, I-VII. Meaney identifies similarities between Guthlac's and Wilfrid's births which were signalled by flames rising from the house to the heavens and women running from inside to announce his birth; Meaney, "Felix's Life of Guthlac: Hagiography and/or Truth?" p. 31. Also VF, I, XXXV, XXXIX and HE, III.19 describing Fursa's construction of a hermitage at Cnobheresburg, East Anglia and the exhumation of his uncorrupted remains at Lagny after 649.

<sup>629</sup> VG, XXI-II; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 84-5.

<sup>630</sup> He concedes that Fursa's sins are recorded in greater detail than Guthlac's; Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 305-7.

<sup>631</sup> Compare VG, XXXI: '*forma terribiles, capita magna, colla longa, macilentia facie...squalida barba*' to VF, VIII: '*plena deformitate et nigredine*', '*nulla forma, nisi horribilis et volatica umbra*'.

<sup>632</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 305-7; Y. Hen, "The Structure and Aims of the *Visio Baronti*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 47, no. 2 (1996), pp. 478-80. Also, on how Guthlac's special relationship with Bartholomew may have served as a role model for missionaries and those in regular combat against the devil, as evidenced in the transformation of 'pagan' place-names by churches dedicated to Bartholomew see Graham Jones, "Ghostly Mentor, Teacher of Mysteries: Bartholomew, Guthlac and the Apostle's Cult in Early Medieval England," *Medieval Monastic Education* (2000).

<sup>633</sup> Thacker, "Thesis," p. 305 discusses other contemporary vision accounts that were circulating in eighth-century England. Many of these works relate similar thought-worlds which do not reflect a direct influence on the *Vita Guthlaci*, but on the popularity of visionary accounts. Also Di Paolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St Paul*, pp. 41-57.

*Fursei*.<sup>634</sup> In reference to the last point, she highlights many of the same linguistic similarities between Guthlac and Fursa's *vitae*, similarly concluding that Felix's descriptions of the demons distends their grotesque appearance beyond his sources (whether Antonine or Furseian).<sup>635</sup> Similarly, are Felix's descriptions of hell as an '*oscura caverna dell'abisso infernale*' in which the sinner experiences extremes of hot and cold recognized as similar to a number of other accounts, including Drythelm's, included by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>636</sup> However, Ciccarese's study is the first to propose that Guthlac's journey to the Underworld may also have been 'stamped' by language used to describe the Underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Descriptions of the '*nefandae tartari fauces, igniflua Herebi hostia, Stigiae fibrae, aestivi Acherontis voragines*' and Bartholomew's descent '*ab aethereis sedibus radiantis Olympi*' can thus be added to the list of Virgilian phrases which Colgrave identified in his edition.<sup>637</sup> Her analysis again highlights how Felix utilized various sources to accommodate current tastes and hagiographical conventions.

Her study, though brief, highlights nuances that contribute to a greater appreciation of Felix's extensive range of sources and models. Nor does her study make Felix's *vita* any less relevant for the monastic audience which copied and preserved this text. Virgil's writings were studied in the classroom and Felix follows the hagiographical traditions of his age and previous ages in sometimes borrowing the language of pre-Christian Latin authors whom he had learned in the course of his studies.<sup>638</sup> There are numerous examples of Christian writers using Virgil's language to elevate their own works; Augustine's *City of God* uses Virgil as an example of 'how patristic thought sought to explain the origins of much heathen myth in biblical terms,' for Virgil was considered the 'best in moral respects'.<sup>639</sup> Even Alcuin's biographer relates how Alcuin's own love of Virgil was only finally staunch by divine intervention.<sup>640</sup> Moreover, textual analysis has also shown that besides Alcuin, Boniface, Lul, Milret of Worcester, Egburh (a lady of Boniface's circle), Tatwine, Bede and Aldhelm all knew the *Aeneid* and most of these, also had

<sup>634</sup> VF, IV, VIII, XIII, XXIX, VG, XXXI-III; Ciccarese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* di Felice," pp. 138-9.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid, p. 139 especially n.17. She also concedes that the role of St Bartholomew as protector and the demons obedience to Guthlac following Bartholomew's intervention are also unique features.

<sup>636</sup> By way of an example, Ciccarese notes that Drythelm also described a hell which alternated between hot and cold; HE, III.19, V, 12-4; Ibid, p. 140-1 citing J. Vendryes, "L'enfer Glacé," *Revue Celtique* XLVI (1929).

<sup>637</sup> Ciccarese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* di Felice," p. 142. Colgrave cites passages as borrowed from the *Aeneid* on *Felix's Life*, pp. 82, 100, 108, 110, 115, 116, 130, 170.

<sup>638</sup> Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), pp. 66, 100. Many of these works were also known through commentators like Donatus, Servius, Priscian and Macrobius who were also popular in schools; D. Comparetti, *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, trans. by E.F.M. Benecke (London: 1966), pp. 50-100.

<sup>639</sup> *City of God*, XV.9 cites *Aeneid*, XII.899-900; cited by Andy Orchard, *Pride & Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters of the Beowulf MS*, 2002 reprint ed. (Toronto: 1995), p. 79. Comparetti argues that because Virgil was the best morally, he was 'used to support great principles of Christianity,' *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, trans. by E.F.M. Benecke (London: 1966), pp. 96-9. Also Riggs Alden Smith, *The Primacy of Vision in Virgil's Aeneid* (Austin: 2005). A huge compendium of excerpts of Virgil compiled by J.M. Ziolkowski and M.C.J. Putnam in *The Virgilian Tradition: the first fifteen hundred years* (New Haven: 2008).

<sup>640</sup> In the model of Jerome's anti-Ciceronian dream, Ep. 22; J.D.A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin (670-804)* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1936), p. 258. For Alcuin's use of Virgil see *The Virgilian Tradition: the first fifteen hundred years*, ed. by J.M. Ziolkowski and M.C.J. Putnam (New Haven: 2008), pp. 96-100.



knowledge of the *Eclogues* and *Buccolics*.<sup>641</sup> Lapidge has even posited that Bede's revision of the Bečanon manuscript metrical *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* was undertaken to remove 'metrical peccadilloes' that became evident after his reading of *Aeneid*, book IV.<sup>642</sup> It is particularly significant to our understanding of Felix's influences that Lapidge has also shown that Aldhelm, whom Felix imitated and echoed, cites from all twelve books of the *Aeneid* as well as the *Buccolics* and *Georgics* in his works.<sup>643</sup> Orchard has noted that there are over 130 citations in his *De Metriis*, four direct quotes in *De Virginitate*, as well as a number of other borrowings and mentions of Virgil's name in the surviving corpus attributed to Aldhelm.<sup>644</sup> In fact, Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium* closes with a brief '*allo cutio excusativa*' in which he compares himself to Virgil!<sup>645</sup> Such studies serve to establish that Virgil was both circulated and emulated in Anglo-Saxon England though the manuscript evidence is frustratingly late and of uncertain provenance.<sup>646</sup> The *Vita Guthlaci* contributes to this discussion since the short phrases which Colgrave and Ciccacese identified reveal that Felix had access to at least books 1, 2, 4, 5, 11 and 12 of the *Aeneid* as well as his *Georgics*. Indeed, though Colgrave has noted that Felix cites from both Aldhelm's *De Metriis* and *De Virginitate* in his *vita*, the range of borrowings identified above demonstrate that his knowledge and familiarity with Virgil was not defined by its transmission through Aldhelm.<sup>647</sup>

While Felix is much indebted to Anthony's model, he directly copies little from Evagrius and then only when emphasizing conventions early on in his *vita*. Kurtz's argument that Felix's work was the only uniquely Antonian creation in four hundred years of hagiographical writing disregards, in respect to this study, not only the importance of the other narrative echoes, linguistic borrowings and similarities within Felix's work but also the significant integration of other sources into strikingly 'Antonian' episodes. It is hoped that the prior discussion showed there is notable research which relates the overall narrative progression and personal development to more 'current' Northumbrian models, like the *Vita Cuthberti*, and made use of popular visionary material, such as was circulated in connection with Fursa. That Felix used the *Life of St Anthony*

<sup>641</sup> Ibid, p. 258 and more thorough, M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), pp. 188-90, 335-6 who also questions the extent to which Classical Latin literature was not represented in the scriptoria of the Anglo-Saxon mission in Germany at p.81.

<sup>642</sup> i.e. lines like *ignis edax* in *BMVC*, l. 322 like *Aeneid*, book II.758; M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), pp. 108-9. Neil Wright has argued that 'Virgil's poetry was an integral part of the teaching of the rules of Latin prosody and quantitative poetry at Wearmouth-Jarrow.' In 'Bede and Vergil,' *Romanobarbarica* 6 (1981-2), p. 377.

<sup>643</sup> M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), pp. 188-90.

<sup>644</sup> Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1994), pp. 130-5, especially pp. 132-3 and more concise, *The Virgilian Tradition: the first fifteen hundred years*, ed. by J.M. Ziolkowski and M.C.J. Putnam (New Haven: 2008), pp. 92-6.

<sup>645</sup> Cited in Ibid, p. 6. Wright notes that usually Virgil was alluded to anonymously; *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Hampshire: 1995), p. 174.

<sup>646</sup> There are two mentions of Virgil in Anglo-Saxon libraries: Alcuin's list and the late 11<sup>th</sup> c. list from Worcester includes the *Buccolics* and *Georgics*; Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss, eds., *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Cambridge: 1985), p.46. Catalogues of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. note Virgilian manuscripts at Bury, Canterbury, Durham, Glastonbury, Lincoln, Reading, Rochester and Whitby; Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England. Figuring the Aeneid from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: 1995), p. 31 and Appendix I, pp. 285-308. Most recent list of MSS. containing Virgil; M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), pp. 335-6 who also suggests that Glastonbury's 13<sup>th</sup> c. compiler marked a copy of Virgil's works '*uetustus*' to indicate that it was possible from the 10<sup>th</sup> c. at p. 73.

<sup>647</sup> Colgrave ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 15-8 for terminological similarities and p. 60 for a quote in Felix's preface.

because it was the only other *vita* of a hermit appears a much more reasonable conclusion in light of these findings.<sup>648</sup> His integration and application of sources according to hagiographical convention indicate his interest in showing how Guthlac corresponded to traditions of sanctity by making use of texts which were appropriate to this unique narrative. Above all, the *Vita Guthlaci* reflects the contemporary popularity of visionary literature which appears to have been widely circulated due to its sobering message for those who disavowed the Church.<sup>649</sup> Extant eighth-century visions of heaven and hell are described by both ecclesiastics and laymen, suggesting that though they survive due to transmission in monastic milieu, they appealed to a wider audience. This aspect will be isolated and explored in chapter six. Nonetheless, the sources and models used by Felix ensured that the *Vita Guthlaci* elevated its subject according to well-recognized standards. Felix's success in this can be confirmed by the fact that his *vita* was adopted by Crowland and held to be the definitive account of Guthlac's spiritual career, five hundred years after it was first composed.

### **The Vernacular Versions**

It is widely agreed that most of the vernacular Guthlacian materials were preserved by monks who copied these texts into larger anthologies in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries, though their transmission history remains unknowable prior to this point. Nor can much else be postulated about the early authorship or provenance of these texts, outside of the general agreement that they were composed by highly literate authors who were well versed in heroic narrative style and were likely monastically trained.<sup>650</sup> Unfortunately, more general observations regarding vernacular hagiographical tradition or its conventions are problematic because of the paucity of Old English texts which could be used as a basis for comparison.<sup>651</sup> Indeed, scholarship to date tends towards the identification of themes and influences in these versions, since direct modelling or borrowing of Felix, and therefore his sources, has been considered, though not widely agreed upon, for all of these texts.<sup>652</sup> Direct quotations and textual allusions are simply not employed for the same purpose nor are they found peppered throughout the vernacular genres to the same degree as the Latin *vitae*. Besides the *Vita Guthlaci* (or the same oral tales that Felix used), it has been suggested that the vernacular versions were influenced by

<sup>648</sup>Thacker, "Thesis," pp. 291, 301 and Ciccarese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti E i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice," pp. 137-8.

<sup>649</sup>Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 87.

<sup>650</sup>Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society (the Anglo-Saxon Period)*, 1956 reprint ed., II vols., vol. II, *The Pelican History of England* (Aylesbury: 1952), pp. 204-22; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. xi-xxii and Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy."

<sup>651</sup>For instance, Stanley B. Greenfield, *A Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: 1965); Ker, *Catalogue*; R.D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, *A History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: 2003).

<sup>652</sup>The newest edition of the Exeter MS contains the most current summary of scholars who consider, and those who do not consider Felix's *vita* to have influenced the poem *Guthlac A*. It also provides a summary of the lines which are considered directly influenced by the Latin in *Guthlac B*; Muir, ed., *Exeter Anthology*, pp. 435-60. Also, Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, pp. 4-21 for the relationship between the Vespasian and Vercelli materials.

the Bible, visionary literature, elegiac poetry and the liturgy. Analyses of the Old English Martyrology, the Vercelli homily, the Vespasian *life*, and the Exeter book poems in this order will elucidate the sources used to complement the legend in these variations and in turn, recommend what kind of audience might have best appreciated these allusions and echoes. Moreover, elaboration of individual episodes or details in these texts will show how the Guthlac legend could be adapted to a variety of purposes and messages; a question which has not yet been fully considered in regards to the vernacular versions within the Guthlac dossier.

The Old English *Martyrology* is a good text to begin with because it was undoubtedly created for liturgical use, unlike the uncertain function of other vernacular texts. The short Guthlacian entries in this *Martyrology* concern both Pega and Guthlac, though ultimately the latter, for Pega's entry unusually does not record her place of internment like all the other entries, but merely her role in a healing miracle involving a relic of her brother's.<sup>653</sup> Nor does Pega appear in the Latin Martyrologies or in any calendars produced outside of Crowland's vicinity, leading Kotzor to claim Felix's *vita* as its source for all but her feast date.<sup>654</sup> Jane Roberts proposed that Guthlac's entry, describing only the miraculous portents at his birth and that he was supported by an angel during his years at the hermitage, implies that the Martyrologist gathered this material from another liturgical source based on Felix's *vita*, choosing events that were relevant to a 'context of worship and prayer'.<sup>655</sup> Such texts could have existed at the time that the Martyrologist was working and Roberts supports her theory by drawing our attention to a Guthlacian office from an eleventh-century Worcester manuscript, which similarly mentioned only Guthlac's angelic visitor and the *manus Dei* at his birth, and the collect at the end of John of Tynemouth's epitome, which recalls only the angel's visits. Specifically, she notes how this Worcester office progresses from the 'angel of consolation' into the Magnificat, which then begins the week's singing of the Psalter after it is explained that 'Through the intervention of our saint Guthlac, let us worship the Lord.' The selection of the *manus Dei* and other divine portents from Guthlac's birth to coincide with Psalm readings that recollect Christ's birth, she suggests, cannot be 'mere coincidence'.<sup>656</sup> She points out that reference throughout the *Martyrology* to Sacramentaries or Mass books implies the importance of these kinds of texts as sources, and possibly even that it was the Martyrologist's intention to explain festivals and the church calendar using them.<sup>657</sup>

The problem with Roberts' theory is that she does not reconcile Pega's entry to it. Is it possible, by using this reasoning, that Pega's entry, describing how she administered salt blessed

<sup>653</sup> Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, II, no. 15. This miracle was the focus of VG, LIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 166-70.

<sup>654</sup> First argued by G. Herzfeld, *An Old English Martyrology*, vol. cxvi, *Early English Texts Society* (1900), p. xxxviii.

Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, II, p.200 cites Wormald that Pega's feast is only provided in two Crowland calendars; Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296, mid-11<sup>th</sup> c. and in London Lambeth Palace MS 873, 15<sup>th</sup> c.; Wormald, ed., *EBK before 1100*, p. 254 and Patrick Wormald, ed., *EBK after 1100*, II vols., vol. I (London: 1946), p. 117.

<sup>655</sup> Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 203-4; Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 79.

<sup>656</sup> Roberts transcribes and translates the office without its neumes in Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 78-80, citing full edition in de Gray Birch, ed., *Memorials*, pp. 70-1.

<sup>657</sup> Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's 'Vita Sancti Guthlaci'," p. 79.

by her brother to an ailing pilgrim and healed him, could have been chosen to complement the feast celebrating Christ's revelation to the world on January 6<sup>th</sup>? This would be more problematic to prove because Pega's feast date appears to be an invention designed merely to highlight a miraculous exhibition of Guthlac's posthumous sanctity. The biggest obstacle to Roberts' article appears to be the fact that this healing miracle only survives in Felix's *vita*, which in fact supports Kotzor's conclusion that the Martyrologist knew this text, even if another now-lost material may have also been consulted for the Guthlac entry. Analyses of the Guthlacian materials of the *Old English Martyrology* may not agree on the source of these entries, though they mutually confirm the relevance of this legend for the liturgical context for which the *Old English Martyrology* was intended.

Another liturgical variant of the Guthlac legend which similarly proves this point, though it uses different narrative details than the *Old English Martyrology*, has survived in the Vercelli codex. The inclusion of a homily on Guthlac suited the Vercelli collection because it contained other homilies that envisioned the *miles Christi* heroically battling against God's enemies to achieve everlasting reward.<sup>658</sup> Indeed, the Vercelli homily on Guthlac, XXIII, invents Guthlac's direct access to heaven as following his rescue from hell in order to show God's immediate reward of his victory over demonic persecution. This ending is the only disparity in an otherwise close translation of Felix's descriptions of Guthlac's *solitaria vita* and the demonic attacks that he endured after taking up the hermitage. The translation of Felix's chapters XXVIII-XXXII is otherwise so exact as to still begin with '*Wæs þær in þam sprecenan iglande...*', despite Crowland having not yet been named at the point at which this selection was excerpted.<sup>659</sup> While Roberts points out that the two preceding homilies employ similar conventional closing statements as Homily XXIII, she also drew explicit attention to the lines preceding them that describe Bartholomew escorting the saint to heaven immediately after he has seen hell.<sup>660</sup> Such excerpting of Felix's *vita* suggests that this Homilist intended to highlight a particular trait exemplified by Guthlac in this episode.

Both Roberts and Olsen concur that the Homilist was not concerned with reproducing the 'biographical outline' of hagiography in Homily XXIII, though Roberts was the first to consider the significance of this deviance.<sup>661</sup> One possibility that she proposes is that here Bartholomew appears in 'his original function as psychopomp', as may have been circulated in other stories

<sup>658</sup> Some comparisons might be made to *Andreas*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *Elene* and the psychomachia homilies XIX, XX, XXII. An example of the consequence of a vassal not obeying his lord is the subject of homily X. Scragg, ed., *Vercelli Homilies* and Nicholson, ed., *The Vercelli Book Homilies Translated from the Anglo-Saxon*, intro. by Francis M. Clough, pp. 1-12.

<sup>659</sup> There was in the aforesaid island... beginning the homily's translation of VG, XXVIII-XXXII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 92-106; Scragg, ed., *Vercelli Homilies*, p. 381; Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII*, p. 97.

<sup>660</sup> Homily XXIII; '*7 he þær leofað 7 rixaþ in heofona rices wuldre a butan ende on ecnesse amen fiat*'; Homily XXII; '*Se ðe leofað 7 ricsað aa butan ende in ecnesse*'; Homily XXI; '*se leofað 7 rixað mid fæder 7 mid suna. 7 mid ðam haligan gaste on wuldre 7 on wyrðmynde aa butan ende on ecnesse*'; Jane Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's Vita Sancti Guthlac," *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose* (1986), pp. 372-3.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid, p. 373. Also Scragg, ed., *Vercelli Homilies*, pp. 381-2. Gonser considers this scene an independent part of a ceremonial ending, though he does not explore the content further; Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, p. 72.

about the saint. Szarmach took this theory a bit further by suggesting that this homily was intended 'as much for St Bartholomew's glory as for Guthlac's', though Roberts has disputed this by showing how John Mirk's *Narracio* for St Bartholomew's Day used Felix's *vita* as source but emphasized Bartholomew's aid over Guthlac's abilities, even to the extent that he undermined Guthlac's constancy when exposed to hell's view, to favour this reliance upon Bartholomew.<sup>662</sup> The Vercelli homily does not destabilize Guthlac's virtues through any overbearing interventions and if anything, its narrative focus heightens the attention directed towards them. Surely Roberts' comparison proves that the Vercelli Homilist intended a work which did not undermine Guthlac's merits but rather honed the saint's steadfastness as his most important virtue, as exemplified through reference to this well-known, climactic challenge.

Roberts' most reasonable theory proposes instead that, like *Guthlac A*, the Guthlac Homilist knew the Antonian tradition well enough to distinguish what was unique and what might be more comparable to popular vision accounts like Fursa's.<sup>663</sup> This might explain why Homily XXIII does not behave like the hagiography that it translates, nor like a conventional homily either, because its author intended through selection of existing material and minor invention to arrive at what Roberts has termed purely a 'celebration of Guthlac's constancy'.<sup>664</sup> It could also explain why Homily XXIII closes with incidents that take place at hell and heaven. The sensational appeal of the otherworldly vision can be noted by the survival of a number of similar accounts recorded by monks, making the episode in which Guthlac is dragged to hell by demons perhaps one of the most identifiable or popular stories about this saint to have been originally in circulation. Unquestionably this story became one of the most popular influences on visual representations, appearing in both in the Harley Roll and I suspect, the West Front Quatrefoil. Such evidence strongly suggests that this selection of material was less atypical than the selection of episodes used in the Old English *Martyrology*, which appear with less frequency in both visual and literary materials.<sup>665</sup> The significance of these differences strongly suggests that they were intended for different purposes; the sensational appeal of otherworldly trials focused upon in Vercelli Homily XXIII assures its audience through Guthlac's model that steadfast faith will be rewarded by God, while the *Martyrology* entries focus more upon proofs of Guthlac's sanctity. Above all, the Vercelli homily appears to evidence how Guthlac's model could be made applicable and attainable to a wider audience through the development of an isolated episode.

<sup>662</sup>Paul E. Szarmach, "The Vercelli Homilies: Style and Structure," in *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard F. Huppé (Albany: 1978), p. 261; Roberts, "OE Prose Translation," pp. 374-5. Roberts identifies that Mirk's text focuses upon Bartholomew's help as rescuing Guthlac. Bartholomew appears more prominent in the later traditions, especially in Crowland's crests uniting Bartholomew's knives with Guthlac's scourge; figs.31-2

<sup>663</sup>Roberts, "OE Prose Translation," pp. 373-4. Scragg notes that it is not conventional because of this; *Vercelli Homilies*, pp. 381-2.

<sup>664</sup> Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" p. 375.

<sup>665</sup> Demons carrying Guthlac to hell appear in roundels VII & VIII and the top petal of the quatrefoil. Angelic support is only depicted in roundel VI, while the divine portents at his birth, including the *manus Dei* were not visually treated or textually in *Guthlac A*, *Guthlac B*, the Vercelli homily XXIII, or Orderic. God's provision of an angel to support Guthlac at his hermitage is recorded in all surviving materials, though the angel is sometimes conflated with St Bartholomew and other times not. For example see roundel VI or *Guthlac A*, ll. 93-139. See fig.4.

The same Old English source from which the Vercelli Homilist made his selection has also been identified by Gonser as the source for a fuller translation of Felix's *vita* which has survived in British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D xxi.<sup>666</sup> This Old English translation is unique amongst the surviving vernacular saints' *lives* because it is not a creative interpretation of its Latin exemplar but a close literal translation of Felix's prologue and fifty-three chapters into a prologue and twenty-two chapters. Nor do these minor alterations diminish the translator's faithfulness to Felix's *vita*. The Vespasian *life* still unusually keeps Felix's prologue and its dedication which Gordon Whatley identifies is 'usually the first thing to be cut or drastically reduced in Old English adaptations of saints' *lives*'.<sup>667</sup> The narrative then follows with fewer numbered chapter headings until the fourth chapter, where red metallic ink and capitals highlight the beginning of Guthlac's solitary life.<sup>668</sup> The close structure and emphasis upon Guthlac's hermit years is interesting in itself for it suggests that this Old English translation was intended to give its audience the impression of reading the original Latin *vita*. Indeed, even the minor chapter amalgamations and highlighting cannot be perceived as incongruous; for Colgrave pointed out how the copy of Felix's *vita* contained in Crowland's Douai MS 852 contains extra headings during Guthlac's conversion, time at Repton and early years at Crowland, concluding that these divisions were intended to separate lectiones for the saint's octave.<sup>669</sup> Even Roberts notes that the length of the Vespasian *life* would have made it too long to have been 'intended for the pulpit' in its entirety but that like the Vercelli homily, episodes could have been used for particular occasions like Guthlac's octave.<sup>670</sup> In this way, the structure of the Vespasian *life* suggests that it functioned similarly to its original Latin source.

Comparison of the treatment of the Guthlac narrative between the Vespasian *life* and its Latin source will further reveal any alterations that were made. The Vespasian *life* is often considered merely to have simplified and compressed Felix's Latin and to have united the shorter background chapters without introducing any new material. For this reason, it was often overlooked and misrepresented until Roberts.<sup>671</sup> However, the contribution of this text to our understanding of how the Guthlac legend was used lies in its omissions; there are three, 10-15 line passages left out. Two of these omissions relate to miracle stories involving animals, episodes describing thieving ravens and nesting swallows, and so may have been cut because of

<sup>666</sup> Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, pp. 4-21. Also Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" p. 369.

<sup>667</sup> Whatley points out that Ælfric usually composed his own prologue, though he named the Latin author of his source in his *lives* of Agnes, Swithun, Edmund and Martin. E. Gordon Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Lives," *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997), p. 193.

<sup>668</sup> Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" pp. 364-5.

<sup>669</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>670</sup> Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" p. 365.

<sup>671</sup> See Roberts' introduction; *Ibid*, pp. 363-4; Crawford, "Guthlac: An Edition of the Old English Prose Life, Together with the Poems in the Exeter Book."

the perceived irrelevance of their subject matter.<sup>672</sup> The third omission, however, has been considered significant by Gordon Whatley for another reason.

It can be noted that the episode relating Æthelbald's visit to Guthlac's tomb and his subsequent vision finishes with '*Ða tacna god geworhte þurh þæs halgan weres geearnunge, æfter þon þe he forðfered wæs and bebyrged*', omitting about sixteen lines from Felix.<sup>673</sup> The material that was cut describes how, after hearing prophesies about his future, the exiled Æthelbald requested a sign from Guthlac's spirit to know that these things would come to pass. The remainder of Felix's chapter then relates how the saint foretold that food would be miraculously provided on the following day and it was, giving Æthelbald faith in Guthlac.<sup>674</sup> Whatley considers that the possible reason for this unusual omission was 'Æthelbald's attitude'; that the king requiring proof of Guthlac's prophesy presented an undesirable tension between secular and cleric which may not have been deemed suitable for some audiences.

By removing Æthelbald's request for proof, the Old English *life* emphasizes the future king's faith and trust in God and his representative Guthlac's prophesies. Whatley concludes from this comparison that this omission perhaps reveals 'subtle censorship' of Felix's accurate portrayal of the relations between churchmen and secular rulers in order to present a more 'idealized picture' for those unable to fully comprehend its nuances.<sup>675</sup> Indeed, his article compares how this delicate subject, along with clerical conduct, was censored in two other early *lives*, *Machutus* and *Martin*, in order to show that censorship was in existence prior to the Ælfric's writings. Ælfric's Catholic Homilies were composed in the vernacular for public or private reading during a time when Latin literacy was less widespread.<sup>676</sup> Because the Old English translation recreates the impression of reading Felix's Latin text, it reflectively suggests a readership familiar with the hagiographical genre, but one unable to read it in Latin. In fact, the omissions made by the translator of this source suggest he considered and made judgements regarding his close translation based on its intended audience. It is interesting to note, however, that Guthlac's early military prowess remained intact, suggesting that this material was either not considered problematic or too integral to the popularity of the cult to omit. Ultimately, the Vespasian translation implies that it was amongst the earliest texts chosen for translation and that in narrative and structure it sought to preserve an idealized version of Felix's *vita*.<sup>677</sup>

Of all the Old English texts however, *Guthlac A* of the Exeter book has encouraged the most wide ranging debate as to its sources and their intended audience because it cannot be

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<sup>672</sup> VG, XXXVII-XL, ll. 15-24, 18-31 respectively; Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Lives," pp. 194, n. 31; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 116-22. Compared to OEVG, IX-XI; Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*, pp. 49-53.

<sup>673</sup> VG, LII; OEVG, XXI; 'These wonders God performed on account of the merit of the holy man, after he was departed and buried.' Noted by Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Lives," pp. 194-6 citing Gonser's text; Gonser, *Prosa-Leben*, p. 172. Compare to VG, LII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 164-7.

<sup>674</sup> VG, LII.

<sup>675</sup> Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Lives," pp. 195-8.

<sup>676</sup> Clemoes, "Ælfric," pp. 179, 181.

<sup>677</sup> Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation of Felix's '*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*,'" p. 376 and Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 80.

argued that it was composed in recognizable or imitative liturgical genre. Nor has it been verified from either its content or provenance whether this poem was created independently of Felix or contemporaneous to it.<sup>678</sup> Nevertheless, the *A* poet's focus solely upon Guthlac's battle for the hermitage, to the exclusion of his early life and the miracles, prophesies, noble death and elevation that testify to his sanctity, demonstrates that this work was not intended to perform the same function as the Latin hagiography. *Guthlac A* admonishes its audience to lead a Christian life in order to achieve the everlasting reward described in the poem's first line as '*Se biþ gefeana fægrast*'.<sup>679</sup> Most scholars, including but not restricted to Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, Thomas D. Hill, Cynthia Cornell, Laurence Shook, and others consider *Guthlac A* a monastic work due to this message and some have even postulated that *Guthlac A* suits the monastic ideology of the Benedictine Revival because they find fault in the generic attributions of 'monastic' characteristics made in so many analyses of the poem.<sup>680</sup> This section will elucidate what sources and elements of *Guthlac A* have been considered relevant for a monastic audience or even, for the Benedictine revival in particular, in order to reconsider what this poem can tell us about Guthlac's appeal and the spread of the cult.

The first element to consider is the role of angels within the poem. *Guthlac A* begins and ends with a meeting between a soul and an angel in heaven; a structural element which is unique to this version but not Old English poetry.<sup>681</sup> The angel describes the happiness that the soul will experience on 'coming home' to heaven if it practices God's law and performs good deeds.<sup>682</sup> Guthlac's exemplary battle against the demons that reside at his hermitage is then developed through dialogue as a paradigm of how such a meeting may be brought about. This arrangement led Laurence Shook to first consider *Guthlac A* influenced by visionary accounts.<sup>683</sup> In particular, the concept that the way one lives determines the destination of the soul has been considered by many to have been influenced by the *Vision of St Paul*. In fact, Healey's excellent study has argued that Redactions IV & VI of this text had an insular connection, circulating in Old English translation prior to the surviving mid-eleventh century Latin manuscripts because their influence can also be seen in Blickling Homily XVI, Vercelli Homily IX and perhaps even the depiction of

<sup>678</sup> For instance, Roberts concluded that though much of the poem 'loosely resembles' Guthlac's struggles with demons, it cannot be shown that the *A* poet followed any portion of the *vita* closely; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 29. Discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>679</sup> *GA*, l.1; 'The loveliest of delights it is', trans. Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 250; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 83.

<sup>680</sup> Roberts notes this in *Elene*, ll. 935b-8.

<sup>681</sup> Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," Patrick W. Conner, "A Contextual Study of the Old English Exeter Book" submitted for Ph.D., English Department, University of Maryland (1975); Conner, "Source Studies, the Old English *Guthlac A* and the English Benedictine Reformation."

<sup>682</sup> *GA*, ll. 1-29, 722; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 83-4. Hill has suggested that when the angel's status, *yldran* (l. 4), should be translated as 'older' not 'greater or higher'; Thomas D. Hill, "The Age of Man and the World in the Old English *Guthlac A*," *Journal of English and German Philology* 80, no. 1 (1981), p. 15.

<sup>683</sup> *GA*, l.66; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 85; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 251. Olsen suggests that the opening reflects the 'joys of redemption' while the ending culminates in the 'joys of experience'; Olsen, *Heroic Hagiography*, p. 23. Clarke also recognized this pattern, calling it an 'envelope' structure; Catherine A.M. Clarke, "Envelope Pattern and the *Locus Amoenus* in Old English Verse," *Notes and Queries* 50, no. 3 (2003).

<sup>684</sup> Shook, "Prologue of *GA*," p. 299.



Grendel's mere in *Beowulf*.<sup>684</sup> Healey has further identified that this concept was also adapted by Wulfstan in Homily 46 and in the three different Old English versions of the *Three Utterances of the Soul*, showing the wide-ranging influence of this text.<sup>685</sup>

What is similar about *Guthlac A* and the *Vision of St Paul* is the sequence beginning with the meeting between soul and angel, that angel's speech and the soul's observance of God's law while on earth, resulting in the angel assisting the soul on its journey heavenwards.<sup>686</sup> Unlike most of the other texts which Healey has identified as influenced by the *Visio*, Lipp points out that *Guthlac A*'s meeting between the soul and angel does not contain terrifying, admonitory descriptions of the soul's judgement and consequences.<sup>687</sup> Elements of unfavourable consequences at Judgement Day still appear in the poem but only in reference to the demons. The demons in *Guthlac A* decry their inability to leave the Fens as due to the fact that it is the only place they are allowed *restan rynepragum* from their perpetual wanderings and punishments. The demon's explanation as to why they haunt the Fens is not provided in any other variation of the Guthlac narrative though the A poet has adapted his source by not specifying the duration of the demon's respite.<sup>688</sup> These are all elements which have been adapted from the *Vision of St Paul*, indicating that the A poet sought out supplementary explanations to clarify what gains the soul entry into heaven. The A poet did not rely upon hagiographical tradition to explain the necessity of demonic attacks but rather preferred to have the demons relate the opposite outcome of Judgement Day. In this way, *Guthlac A* functions somewhat differently than the visionary accounts which influenced it.

Indeed, the A poet describes the role of angels in the world as both an impetus for leading a virtuous life and an explanation of its bad choices. The A poet describes how Guthlac is watched over by a guardian spirit sent from heaven who encourages faith, virtue and good deeds. Guthlac's early martial exploits, on the other hand, are explained as instigated by a terrible demon who urged Guthlac to 'seek out the society of criminals by night and in reckless fashion strive after worldly gain, as fugitive wretches do, who have no compunction for the life of a man who brings loot into their hands if only they may thus get possession of the pickings.'<sup>689</sup> Guthlac's choices subsequently appear due to forces beyond his control and God eventually intercedes in favour of the angel to rout the demon for once and for all. This is a very interesting way of reconciling Guthlac's problematic early career and one which may have its analogues

<sup>684</sup> Healey 'can't say [the *Beowulf* poet] knew the *Visio*' but that the *Beowulf* poet drew independently on the same source as Blickling Homily XVI; Di Paolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St Paul*, pp. 3, 19, 107, 134.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid, pp. 42-5.

<sup>686</sup> GA, ll. 1-12, 4-5, 14-5, 7, 25, 813 as cited by Shook, "Prologue of GA," pp. 301-2.

<sup>687</sup> Frances Randall Lipp, "Guthlac A: An Interpretation," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1971), pp. 61-2.

<sup>688</sup> GA, ll. 213a; 215-26; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 89. The demons' respite has also been identified in *Soul & Body I* and *II* and Blickling Homily 4, though an unspecified period of respite occurs only here and Junius 85; as listed by Healey Di Paolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St Paul*, pp. 48-50. Also Shook, "Prologue of GA," p. 303.

<sup>689</sup> GA, ll. 123b-132; 'He him dæda lean georne gielded þam þe his giefe willað/ þican to þonce 7 him þas woruld/ utor lætan þonne þæt ece lif;/ ofer hyne scythe þæt he sceaðena gemot/ nihtes sohte 7 þurh nepinge/ wunne æfter worulde swa doð wræcsmæcgas/ þa þe ne birmunað monnes feore/ þæs þe jim to honda hupe gelæded / butan hy þy reafe rædan motan.' Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 253; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 86-7.

amongst the doctrines of 'the watchers of men' described in Genesis IV.1-4 or, as Heaney suggests, in the *Vision of St Paul* which relates how an angel conveys the soul's achievements to God each day at sunrise and sunset.<sup>690</sup> Daniélou has also suggested other possible analogues for the good and evil spirits, identifying how *The Testament of Judah* describes two spirits (truth and deceit) as waiting upon humans and how the *Epistle of Barnabas* names these spirits as angels of God and angels of Satan, like the *Treatise of the Two Ways*, *Hermas* and the Greek *Didache*.<sup>691</sup> Moreover, Lipp identified that a similar dispute arose when St Patroclus was tempted to return to the world; a devil and an angel presented their arguments so that the saint, like his audience, could identify the correct choice.<sup>692</sup> Clearly the idea of 'watchers', while unique to Guthlac legend, was derived from an established tradition which included the *Vision of St Paul*.

Nor was the *Vision of St Paul* the only source which could have influenced the relationship between Guthlac and his angel. Laurence Shook acknowledged the *Vision of St Paul* but he also suggests that Bartholomew's promises of protection substantiate the constant encouraging presence of angels in the world to give mercy.<sup>693</sup> Robin Norris pursues this idea further in considering whether the *A* poet conflated the roles of angel and apostle specifically to 'highlight the angelic', pointing out that Bartholomew is only named at l.723, being referred to at all previous points as an angel.<sup>694</sup> When Bartholomew directly intervenes to rescue Guthlac from hell, he informs the demons that Guthlac is his brother and that he will bring his words and works to the Lord in witness.<sup>695</sup> Another apocryphal text, the *Questions of St Bartholomew*, may have contributed to Bartholomew's role in this poem, describing as ties of friendship and protection between person and angel. This text strikingly relates how Jesus took Bartholomew to hell where it is explained that Bartholomew's promise of friendship with Christ ensures his protection and powers over its demons.<sup>696</sup> Verses describing Satan as unable to rest because of the angels are also found in both texts, and Charles Wright has noted that aspects of the Devil's speech appear common between these two works and others.<sup>697</sup> What these possible influences testify to, is to the knowledge and abilities of the *A* poet to disseminate ideas about angels and peoples' relationships with them. The *A* poet's perspective dramatically transformed elements of the Guthlac legend because of this. In fact, the use of apocryphal texts for these explanations rather

<sup>690</sup> Heaney has identified this motif in *Guthlac A*, *Solomon & Saturn II*, Napier XLVI and the Vercelli homily IV; Di Paolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St Paul*, p. 261. I am grateful to Clare Stancliffe for urging me to pursue these analogues.

<sup>691</sup> *The Testament of Judah*, XX.I; *Epistle of Barnabas* XVIII; cited by Jean Daniélou, "Une Source De La Spiritualité Judéo-Chrétienne: La Doctrine Des Deux Esprits," *Dieu Vivant* 25 (1953) contra Langen, "Thesis," p. 37.

<sup>692</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Miraculorum libri*, VIII; cited by Lipp, "*Guthlac A*: An Interpretation," p. 49.

<sup>693</sup> Shook, "Prologue of *GA*," p. 290.

<sup>694</sup> Norris, "The Augustinian Theory of Use and Enjoyment in *Guthlac A* and *B*," pp. 171-2. R. Woolf suggested that it appears to be 'an emphasis which seems to be the poet's own' without suggesting any possible analogues; "Saints' Lives," p. 56.

<sup>695</sup> *GA*, ll. 530-703; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 99-104.

<sup>696</sup> *The Questions of St Bartholomew*, III.12-7, 29, 67; Montague Rhodes James, "The Apocryphal New Testament," (Oxford: 1924).

<sup>697</sup> *The Questions of St Bartholomew*, III.29. Wright sees similarities in the devil's accounts amongst *Guthlac A*, B.L. Cotton Tiberius A.iii(m), Napier XLIII (n), Cynewulf's *Juliana*, the legend of St Margaret, and the apocryphal gospels for Thomas and Bartholomew; Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, p. 176.

than biblical or hagiographical tradition identifies that *Guthlac A* was not intended to validate his sanctity but to show how his model determined his soul's path. Clearly these influences substantiate the sensational appeal of the visionary aspects already present in *Guthlac A*.

The importance of Guthlac's model in the *A* poem is partly emphasized through the discussion and treatment of 'lifestyles' and the prestige of hermits. In fact, many point to this emphasis as indicative of a monastic readership. Chester Kobos' thesis argues that *Guthlac A* is 'a kind of homiletic discourse upon the heroic nature and pre-eminence of the anchoritic way of life', due to the *A* poet's classification of this lifestyle as the most difficult. In addition, he suggests that emphasis on Guthlac's isolation and demonic persecution, to the exclusion of other narrative details, serves to romanticize ascetic martyrdom.<sup>698</sup> The *A* poet emphasizes Guthlac's extreme sacrifice by not mentioning any other visitors or inhabitants at the site besides the angel and the demons. Coincidentally, Jane Roberts identified that the term *martyrhād* only survives here in the entire corpus of Old English poetry to mark Guthlac's final test of faith at hell's portal.<sup>699</sup> While this might appear to promote asceticism as the means to salvation, the *A* poet qualifies early on that it may be more suitable for some to distribute their wealth by giving alms because only a few are able to follow Guthlac's example of extreme abandonment.<sup>700</sup> The implications of various *hadas* or 'conditions of life', as they are referred to in *Guthlac A*, are thus set out in the beginning though Guthlac's warrior *had* is only elusively mentioned and his life at Repton, not at all.<sup>701</sup> In fact, exclusion of stages from Guthlac's background do not negate the relevance of this work for a monastic audience as it is explained that eternal bliss is promised to all 'those who also live in truth, men of the sacrament, warriors for Christ'.<sup>702</sup> Indeed, *Guthlac A* opens with the disclaimer that 'Many conditions of men there are throughout the world....accordingly we may duly serve in any one of them, if we are willing to keep the holy commandments' to indicate the broader relevance of its message.<sup>703</sup> The *A* poet further enjoins that desire for the soul's homeland admonishes everyone to enact God's message in their work and words, profess brotherly love, follow God's commandments, and 'delight in fasting, avoid wickedness, and turn to prayer'.<sup>704</sup> All those who adhere to these restrictions on earth will be able to enter heaven, encourages *Guthlac A*.

The heroic flavour of Guthlac's battles has also been considered by some scholars to support the suitability of this text for monastic readership; for this audience would recognize and

<sup>698</sup> Kobos, "The Structure and Background of *Guthlac A*," p. 5. Reichardt considered this focus to be emphasized in the landscape through the description of Guthlac's hermitage as a hill which permits him to climb to the highest level of ascetic perfection, as defined by Cassian's *Conferences*; Reichardt, "*Guthlac A* and the Landscape of Spiritual Perfection," pp. 336-7.

<sup>699</sup> *GA*, I. 472; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 97, 147, n. 472.

<sup>700</sup> *GA*, II. 104-5; *Ibid*, p. 86.

<sup>701</sup> Also Damon, *Soldier Saints*, pp. 136, 143.

<sup>702</sup> *GA*, II. 790-6, especially II. 796b-7; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 268; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 106.

<sup>703</sup> *GA*, II. 30-34; 'Monge sindon geond middangeard/ hadas under heofonum þa þe in haligra/ rim arisað; we þæs ryht magun/ æt æghwylcum anra gehyran/ gif we halig bebodu healdan willað'; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 251; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 84.

<sup>704</sup> *GA*, II.781-815; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 268; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 106-7.

appreciate the heroic depiction of a *miles Christi*.<sup>705</sup> Roberts sees the influence of hagiography in Guthlac being described as '*cempa*' and '*eadig oretta*' who was '*ondwiges heard*', equipped with spiritual weapons like St Anthony or St Paul's direction to the Ephesians, and in the similarity between Guthlac's *frecnessa fela* and Paul's *insidias diaboli*.<sup>706</sup> Toby Langen similarly argues that *Guthlac A* embodies the spirit of Anthony's *vita* but with a 'battle spirit' found in other Old English heroic poems. She identified that there is a strong emphasis on military vocabulary in *Guthlac A*, implied through the use of *gestiðan* (to mount), *gesittan* (to occupy), *buwian* (to inhabit), *brucan* (to use), *oretta* (warrior), *on wizes heard* (firm in battle), *þae stlice wæpnum* (spiritual weapons), *ætstæl* (camp).<sup>707</sup> She also notes that when the terms *oretta* and *cempa* are used in conjunction with the word *þeow* they designate 'exile', like the narrators in the *Wanderer* and *Seafarer*, except that Guthlac's exile is twofold in this text: his exile from mankind will terminate his soul's exile from its heavenly homeland. McKinney provided a slightly different interpretation of the *A* poet's use of language for protection, guarding, shielding, keeping and holding by suggesting that when they are used in conjunction with 'hand' words, they could represent the Lord's protection.<sup>708</sup> Threats by the demons to pervert God's protection are then evidenced by their laying on of hands when they transport Guthlac to hell. Like Job, it is explained in *Guthlac A* that God did not want Guthlac's soul to suffer pain and so it was granted *frið*.<sup>709</sup> The poem *Andreas* similarly relates how the Mermedonians threaten physical force to divert Andrew from his faith.<sup>710</sup> Certainly, these interpretations suggest that *Guthlac A* sought to depict these episodes in the most heroic way possible, in a way that suited the depiction of a *miles Christi*.

John Damon explains that the focus upon Guthlac as *miles Christi*, coupled with his strategic taking of the hilltop and the promise of his Lord's reward reveal the 'subordination' of secular lordship to God, which in turn directs the *A* poem's audience to the contrasts between saintly warrior and the secular hero and the rewards of each *had*.<sup>711</sup> Indeed, analyses of the deceptively static verbal arguments between Guthlac and the demons have led Abdou to conclude how the demons responses are repetitive and circular in order to distinguish their false claims from Guthlac's. She further identifies the demons' speech as characterized by assertives and directives - the latter Guthlac never uses in *Guthlac A* as commanding others to do should only be done by God.<sup>712</sup> Nevertheless, there is a power and directness to Guthlac's responses that the demons are unable to muster due to the weakness of their character. Olsen concurs that

<sup>705</sup> Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy." Another notable, yet chronologically later, study of integration and application of 'love' into monastic literature is Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays*.

<sup>706</sup> *GA*, ll. 170-81a; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 254; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 88. Note on similarity to Ephesians 6.XI; p. 135, n. 181.

<sup>707</sup> Langen, "Thesis," pp. 39-40.

<sup>708</sup> McKinney, "*Mec Dryhtnes Hand/ Mundað Mid Mægne*: The King's Protection in *Guthlac A*," p. A56.

<sup>709</sup> *GA*, ll. 409-11, especially l. 406. *Reowe* or 'rough' also described the attacks in *Juliana*, l. 481 and *Andreas*, ll. 1116, 1334; *Ibid*, p. A56. Also Job 1.XII; Langen, "Thesis," p. 53.

<sup>710</sup> *Andreas*, 1.36b, 1458-62; Abdou, "Speech and Power in Old English Conversion Narratives," pp. 197-8.

<sup>711</sup> Damon, *Soldier Saints*, p. 137.

<sup>712</sup> Abdou, "Speech and Power in Old English Conversion Narratives," pp. 208-10.

unlike secular epics they re-enact the hero's departure from his homeland, his trials in the Otherworld, and his triumphal return. Guthlac's attainment of everlasting reward trumps the heroic archetype.<sup>713</sup> Guthlac's victory is consequently assured in this variation of the legend, unlike the battles of heroic characters like Beowulf and Byrhtnoth, because God supported Guthlac in battle.

The subordination of secular battle to holy battle is further evidenced when the demons threaten Guthlac with real physical terrors. Guthlac simply states that '*No ic eow sweord ongean/ mid gebolgne hond oðberan þence,/ worulde wæpen*' and that there will be no bloodshed, as he will give Christ 'a more acceptable gift'.<sup>714</sup> Guthlac's response clearly contrasts with the feuding intimations offered by the demons and proves his dedication to live as a hermit without craving his former *had*.<sup>715</sup> A monastic audience could appreciate this distinction, leading Thomas D. Hill to reconsider Guthlac's trials according to two common components of attacks on hermits: *egessa* (terror) and *idel wundor* (vainglory).<sup>716</sup> Hill perceives that these two elements thread throughout *Guthlac A* in the monotonous dialogues between the demons and Guthlac; the demons are filled with despair due to their failure to terrorize Guthlac and Guthlac warns them not to challenge God, whom Guthlac himself has a healthy fear of. These components also characterize the direction of the demons' actual attacks. Guthlac is first carried upwards to view a scene of monastic misbehaviour to tempt him to exalt himself before being dragged down towards hell so he despairs his sins.<sup>717</sup> The battles which Guthlac fights in the *A* poem still adhere to known schematizations of demonic assaults defined for ascetics and exemplified by exemplars like Job, though they might not bear any resemblance to demonic assaults described in Felix's *vita*. The transposition of heroic imagery was always relevant to the Guthlac legend yet here it is dramatically applied to the battle between Guthlac and the demons in order to highlight the pre-eminence of the eremitic life.

Nonetheless, some scholars have found issue with these vague attributions of monastic suitability based on terminology and themes. Christopher A. Jones in particular challenged that these interpretations of the general 'monasticism' of *Guthlac A* fail to really consider this poem's treatment of subject and its perceived ethos as recommending a particular period and audience.<sup>718</sup> Nor was his article the first to suggest that the Benedictine Revival, when the Exeter book was copied, could have also supplied the sources used by the *A* poet in its composition; Patrick Conner's thesis and the article that it generated questioned the varying definitions of what

<sup>713</sup> Alexander Hennessey Olsen, "Guthlac A and the Myth of the Eternal Return," *Old English Newsletter* 14, no. 2 (1981), p. 51. Also Olsen, *Heroic Hagiography*.

<sup>714</sup> GA, ll. 302b-07; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 257; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 92. Compare the ineptitude of worldly weapons found in *Beowulf*, ll. 379b-80b, 168 to these statements in *Guthlac A*, as per Olsen, *Heroic Hagiography*, p. 35.

<sup>715</sup> Orchard, *Pride & Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters of the Beowulf MS*, p. 47.

<sup>716</sup> GA, ll. 81-8a; Thomas D. Hill, "The Middle Way: *Idel-Wuldor* and *Egesa* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," *Review of English Studies* 30, no. 118 (1979), p. 184.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid, p.185. He further draws similarities between the demonic assaults in *Guthlac A* and the schematization of demonic assaults described by Gregory the Great's *Moralia In Job*, III.8.12.

<sup>718</sup> Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*."

might constitute a 'close verbal similarity' in the aforementioned source studies by instead looking for sources in the context of this poem's manuscript survival. He argued that *Guthlac A* fits a Benedictine revival context because this version specifically and pointedly deals with the greater realities of salvation and provides a model for the soul's training for monastic rule by relating central themes to the *Regularis Concordia* and Smaragdus' *Exposito in Regulam Sancti Benedicti* and *Diadema monachorum*.<sup>719</sup>

For instance, Conner explains *Guthlac A* was 'rare' amongst Old English poems in its many allusions to religious orders and monastic life and that the *A* poet 'chose to substitute' the anomalous episode of monastic misbehaviour rather than a miraculous account because it was more relevant to his concerns and general themes and because it provided examples of typical monastic temptations and Benedictine moderation such as appear in contemporary criticisms of unregulated houses.<sup>720</sup> Moreover, Conner elucidates not only how personal struggle against worldly demons typifies monastic life but also how the allegorical connection between Guthlac's hermitage and heaven that originates in the *A* poem would have been relevant to Benedictine reformed houses. C. Jones concurred that the *A* poet endows this version with concepts of land seizure, building and defending because these concepts appealed specifically to the Benedictine reformers.<sup>721</sup> As evidence, he draws attention to the *A* poet's use of the term *hus* (dwelling) over *cyte* (cell) as implying monastic foundation (including land and dwellings) that could be transformed from uninhabitable land into an earthly paradise.<sup>722</sup> Ultimately Guthlac's asceticism embodied the highest spiritual level that was attainable and recognizable to a monastic audience from their readings of the *Regula*, though it is possible that the distinctions between Guthlac's struggle and a *cœnobe*'s could still be personally meditated upon or by community endeavours to create a heaven-on-earth. Indeed, Catherine Clarke's research has argued how 'a particularly relevant spiritual allegory' of land reclamation and transformation in *Guthlac A* and the *Vita Guthlaci* made this cult of interest to Benedictine Glastonbury.<sup>723</sup> Conner and C. Jones' readings into the significant divergences between *Guthlac A* and Felix's *vita* reconsider the Old English text's less obvious suitability and conventions for the monasteries in which it was copied and preserved.

While unresolved dating issues were treated in chapter 2, it is important here to focus upon Conner and C. Jones' reconsideration of the relevance of *Guthlac A* for the Benedictine context in which its sole manuscript has survived. Their theories, based on the resonance of Benedictine thought in the Exeter anthology, may present substantial opposition to the historiography of *Guthlac A* though most relevantly in the interests of this discussion, these

<sup>719</sup> Conner, "A Contextual Study of the Old English Exeter Book," Conner, "Source Studies, the Old English *Guthlac A* and the English Benedictine Reformation," pp. 385-6.

<sup>720</sup> Conner, "Source Studies, the Old English *Guthlac A* and the English Benedictine Reformation," pp. 405-6.

<sup>721</sup> Jones, "Envisioning the *Cenobium* in the Old English *Guthlac A*," p. 284.

<sup>722</sup> Especially *Ibid*, pp. 274-86.

<sup>723</sup> Clarke, "The Allegory of Landscape: Land Reclamation and Defence at Glastonbury Abbey," Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400*.

scholars do not presuppose a markedly different audience for the *A* poem than opposing theses which lean towards an earlier compositional date. The *A* poet's intention to imagine a particular component of the Guthlac narrative distinctly, though still infuse it with doctrines, ideas and allusions found in Church writings ensured its manuscript survival, as surely as it ensured *Juliana* and other Old English saints' *lives*. Consequently, in the interests of this chapter, it is important to recognize that many analyses of *Guthlac A* conclude that the attitudes and ideas towards Guthlac's battle for his hermitage were most relevant to, as in identifiable for, a literate, and therefore probably a monastic, audience.

A monastic context has similarly been proposed for the appending Exeter book poem *Guthlac B* but for different reasons. Zacharias Thundy argued not long after Conner's thesis that *Guthlac B* is 'not only a hagiographical description of the death and glorification of the saint but also a celebration of spiritual friendship, which is both Christian and monastic in theory and practice.'<sup>724</sup> Thundy considers God at the centre of all Guthlac's friendships in the *B* poem; citing Becel and Guthlac's friendship communicated (God and heaven are often invoked in their discourse) and lived in God's presence. God the Judge is also called to witness Guthlac's deathbed promise to his sister.<sup>725</sup> By this line of reasoning, Guthlac's glorification can then be interpreted as evidencing God's approval of the relationships so prominently displayed in *Guthlac B*.

At the time that Thundy published, many critics had viewed the *B* poet's focus upon the relationship between the dying saint and his attendant as an appropriated Germanic *comitatus* or heroic alliance. Yet his analysis countered that religious concepts like Grace, temptation, perseverance, and spiritual friendship permeated where glory, fame, generosity and military camaraderie should have been. He even suggests that the term *ombehtþegn* used by Guthlac for his attendant might denote 'seminarian or lay brother'.<sup>726</sup> The idea of teacher-disciple fellowship through spiritual warfare has been defended by Ambrose, Alcuin, Cassian and others who have themselves sought and advised finding friends in Christ and bringing those friends closer to God.<sup>727</sup> Guthlac's hope for reunion with God, friends and family in heaven could conceivably have been influenced by one of these exemplars or even, as Robin Norris has suggested, by Augustinian theories about use and enjoyment. The attendant's inability to grasp 'When you enjoy a man in God, you enjoy God rather than the man' explains his self-reflexive grief and his inability to comfort either dying saint or his sister. Norris explains that the attendant has erroneously enjoyed Guthlac's relationship for its own sake and therefore will fixate upon his

<sup>724</sup> Zacharias P. Thundy, "St Guthlac and Spiritual Friendship," *American Benedictine Review* 36, no. 2 (1985), p. 148.

<sup>725</sup> *GB*, ll. 1182-92 (sister), 999-1300 (attendant), 1300-25 (Guthlac glorified); *Ibid*, pp. 147-8.

<sup>726</sup> Gordon Hall Gerould, *Saint's Legends* (Cambridge: 1916), p. 84; Greenfield, *A Critical History of Old English Literature*, p. 122 as cited by Thundy, "St Guthlac and Spiritual Friendship," pp. 145-8; Sally A. Mussetter, "Types as Prophet in the Old English *Guthlac B*," *Viator* XIV (1983), p. 46.

<sup>727</sup> Ambrose, *De Officiis*, III.21-22; Cassian, *Collatio* XVI, *De Amicitia*, XVI.14; Paulinus of Nola, *Epistola* XL.2; Gregory the Great, *Homilia in Evangelia*, II.30, I.9; Alcuin, *Epistola*, 5, 18, 79, 158, 170, 186, 209; and others cited by Thundy, "St Guthlac and Spiritual Friendship," pp. 154-8.

impending separation from his friend.<sup>728</sup> Guthlac, by this same argument, has enjoyed God in all his relationships which explained why he does not grieve over being estranged from family or friends and also why he is dying a 'cheerful-hearted man' in contrast to descriptions of the attendant as 'melancholy, chilled and weary of spirit'.<sup>729</sup> The prominent focus upon this relationship at Guthlac's deathbed shows how elements of Felix's narrative could be developed or emphasized for effect; here modelling how spiritual friendship should be practiced.

The other purpose served by the *B* poet's expression of spiritual friendship appears to be the perpetuation of Guthlac's cult. Throughout *Guthlac B*, Guthlac assures his attendant that their friendship will transcend this world, and in return the faithful attendant promises to never 'let the kinship of love grow sluggish in your time of need', witnessing on behalf of the future community Guthlac's deathbed pledge.<sup>730</sup> Guthlac's promises of friendship and succour after his death make clear that their relationship is stronger than the bonds of a *comitatus* or secular lord. Such promises further imply that Guthlac will continue to watch over his friends from the afterlife, supporting the depiction of him as a heavenly intercessor.<sup>731</sup> Advertisements such as these would have been important not only to the patronage of his shrine but to the ethos of the community in charge of tending it. Descriptions of Guthlac as the 'refuge of your friends' and his home explicitly as a 'place of retreat' and 'hereditary seat' have consequently been interpreted as favouring identifications of Crowland as his cult centre.<sup>732</sup> In addition, the *B* poet refers to an oratory with a landing place on an island and the sister's task of interring Guthlac's body there; all features reminiscent of what we know of Crowland's genesis from Felix's *vita*.<sup>733</sup> This substantiates that Crowland, where Guthlac was interred, was considered an important site for veneration of this saint by the anonymous author of *Guthlac B*. Indeed, Guthlac's own directions to entrust his remains 'to the hill' where they must 'abide awhile' is suggestive of Guthlac's corporeal incorruptibility, translation and miraculous reputation described in Felix's last few chapters or other material in circulation at the time of *Guthlac B*'s composition.<sup>734</sup>

The *B* poet's emphasis upon exemplifying spiritual friendship through Guthlac's model may also explain why neither the attendant nor the sister are named, despite the fact that the *B*

<sup>728</sup> Translation from Augustine's *City of God*, I.22.20 cited by Norris, "The Augustinian Theory of Use and Enjoyment in *Guthlac A and B*," pp. 165, 177.

<sup>729</sup> *GB*, ll. 1156b-58a; 'Ongon ða hygegeomor,/ freorig 7 ferðwerig, fusne gretan,/ meðne, modglædne;' trans. by Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 278; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 117.

<sup>730</sup> *GB*, ll. 1173b-5a; 'Næfre ic lufan sibbe/ peoden æt pearfe pine forlæte/ asanian.' Trans. and concept in Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 268, 278; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 118.

<sup>731</sup> *GB*, ll. 1166-73a, 1175b-96, 1238-62a; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 118, 120-21. Also Thundy, "St Guthlac and Spiritual Friendship," p. 148.

<sup>732</sup> *GB*, ll. 1012, 1317-9; 'freonda hleo', 'burgstede', 'eadges yrfestol'; trans. by Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 274, 282; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 113, 122.

<sup>733</sup> *GB*, ll. 1317-1376; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 282-3; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 122-4.

<sup>734</sup> *GB*, ll. 1175b-96; 'ðu hyre eac saga/ þæt heo þis banfæt beorge bifæste,/ lame biluce, lic orsawle/ in þeostorcōfan þær hit brage sceal/ in sondhōfe sibban wunian.' Trans. by Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 278-9; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 118. Guthlac's remains are disinterred and found incorrupt, twelve months after his death, as described in the *VG*, LI (though Colgrave identifies that this was based upon *BVCPr.*, XLII amongst other sources like Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini*, 25-7); Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 10, 160-3 (XLII), 194. However, this assertion appears to have been short-lived for though Orderic copies Felix's XLII, the *Miracula* and *Translatio* refer only to the saint's sweet-scented bones; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, Book IV, pp. 336-9.



poet's cites that 'books' were his source.<sup>735</sup> As shown above, it may be that the deliberate namelessness of the attendant serves to comprise all those to whom Guthlac has promised friendship; both his community and those outside it who believe in his efficacy.<sup>736</sup> Frederick Biggs considers the namelessness of characters to represent 'concepts rather than people', interpreting the attendant to symbolize the body cut off from mental understanding and mired in grief, and the sister as the personification of hope to be reunited at the End of Days.<sup>737</sup> He further qualifies the use of dual pronouns in the attendant's moving lament to Guthlac's sister to represent the body's hope for reunification.<sup>738</sup> The severance of body and soul was a popular motif which the *B* poet may have alluded to in the container metaphors such as *bancofa*, *banfæt*, *lichord*, *banhus* used by Guthlac for his body, Death's division of soul from body, and the *B* poet's reference to the original disobedience which caused this separation.<sup>739</sup> This is certainly a prominent motif in *Guthlac A* and one which must have contributed to the anthologist's ordering of these two poems within the Exeter book. However, it does not fully reconcile the prominence of spiritual friendship within *Guthlac B*.

In fact, the terminology used by Guthlac and his attendant identifies how their relationship was intended to be understood by its audience, particularly statements which relate how Guthlac 'shall be allowed to get rewards of fresh gifts before the knees of the dispensing Lord and follow continuously the Lamb of God for ever after'.<sup>740</sup> Guthlac explains to his attendant that rewards will be given by his *Dryhtnes* because he has served Him in *dædum cwemde, / mode 7mægne*; 'in my deeds, in mood and in might'.<sup>741</sup> Such phraseology has been most movingly developed by the *B* poet to contrast with the sorrowful attendant's fears of his impending separation from his earthly lord, Guthlac. Cynthia Cornell discounted that the conversations between Guthlac and his attendant merely presented the actual attitudes of a thane and visionary leader to death. Damon's more recent study, on the other hand, opined that lordship terminology was used by the *B* poet to contrast earthly and divine lordship, thereby subordinating martial to clerical, and secular lordship to dedication to God.<sup>742</sup> *Guthlac A* similarly used contrasting language to instruct its audience although here this idea may further be supported by the attendant referring to

<sup>735</sup> GB, l.878; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 270; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 112.

<sup>736</sup> Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 268.

<sup>737</sup> Biggs, "Unities in the Old English *Guthlac B*," p. 161.

<sup>738</sup> GB, ll. 1348-1377a; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 123-4. The use of pronouns *wit*, *uncer*, *unc* in this section show this, argues Biggs, "Unities in the Old English *Guthlac B*," pp. 162-5. He also points out that the attendant does not refer to any instructions regarding garments nor dwell on the soul's departure, only the corpse's fate.

<sup>739</sup> Langen, "Thesis," pp. 75, 80; James L. Rosier, "Death and Transfiguration in *Guthlac B*," in *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt*, ed. James L. Rosier (Gravenhage: 1970), p. 84; Daniel Gillmore Calder, "Theme and Strategy in *Guthlac B*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 8, no. 3 (1972), pp. 228, 241.

<sup>740</sup> GB, ll. 1040b-44a; '7 ic sibban mot/ fore meotudes cneowum meorda hleotan, / gingra geafena, 7 Godes lomber/ in sindreamum sibban awo/ forð folgian.' Trans. from Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 275; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 114.

<sup>741</sup> GB, ll. 1083b-86b; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 276; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 115. Also Langen, "Thesis," pp. 75, 84.

<sup>742</sup> Michael D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts and Values in Old English Poetry*, vol. LXXIV, *Studies in English Literature* (The Hague, Paris: 1972), pp. 241-2; cited by Damon, *Soldier Saints*, pp. 131-7. Cornell, "Thesis," p. 187.

Guthlac not only as teacher, friend and master but as father; terms which may have been particularly significant to those who had dedicated their lives to Christ.<sup>743</sup>

A more literal interpretation of this contrast between the attitudes of Guthlac and his attendant was also argued by Soon Ai Low who explained the latter's grief as a basic response to fate, lamented all the more because he is unable to accept Guthlac's reasoning that it is best to stabilize one's mind in order to cease dwelling upon temporal sorrows. She views the ability to cultivate a stable mind as an important component of Alfred's translation of the *Cura Pastoralis* while suggesting that the attendant's speech shows 'an infirmity of the mind', having more in common with speeches in elegiac poems like *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*.<sup>744</sup> A learned audience might be expected to recognize this distinction and conform to the advice given by Guthlac to his attendant. Nor does Low's argument contrast with Damon's in that both view the central relationship in *Guthlac B* as instructive and educative when conceived of in relation to writings on, and the realities of, the practice of monastic life. Both interpretations reflect the suitability of this text for the monastic context in which it was copied and preserved. Besides, those who had dedicated their lives to Christ would have been familiar with the constructs of secular lordship so that the application of it here, contrasted to demonstrate a more fitting allegiance, making their faith as noble. *Guthlac B* portrays a battle-tested saint who, like the Guthlac of the *A* poem, reigns victoriously over his own *sigewong*.<sup>745</sup> It is for these very reasons that *Guthlac B* was rightly acknowledged by Low to not be 'a contrast between elegy and hagiography' but an amalgam of both familiar and conventional elements.<sup>746</sup> *Guthlac B*'s audience would have been expected to recognize these distinctions.

These amalgams of perspective are also reflected in other Old English poems. The Cynewulfian poems that end in runic signatures similarly freely adapt their Latin sources by employing Old English literary conventions such as martial imagery and elegiac features. For instance, the anonymous *Judith* of Cotton Vitellius A xv, similarly promotes the rewards given to a *miles Christi* who fights against the enemies of God, showing how prevalent and popular these elements were.<sup>747</sup> Nevertheless, *Guthlac B* is clearly not merely an Old English translation of the death scene from the Latin hagiography, and we need not compare it to the Vespasian text in order to see this.

Furthermore, it is relevant to this discussion of sources to consider why *Guthlac B* focussed upon Guthlac's death and the spiritual friendship which would transcend it. Guthlac's death provided a focused example of a man who 'achieved perfection', leading Calder to

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<sup>743</sup> Most of these titles can be found in the speech listed at *GB*, ll. 1011-1022; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 274; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 113. Noted by Langen, "Thesis," p. 84.

<sup>744</sup> Low's argument is supported in part by her identification that 1/8<sup>th</sup> of *Guthlac B* contains derivatives of faculty words, such as *mod* and their corporeal location; Soon Ai Low, "Mental Cultivation in *Guthlac B*," *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Medieval Language and Literature* 81, no. 4 (1997), pp. 626-9.

<sup>745</sup> *GB*, l.921 also *GA*, l.743; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 111, 156.

<sup>746</sup> Low, "Mental Cultivation in *Guthlac B*," p. 634.

<sup>747</sup> Patricia A. Belanoff, "Judith: Sacred and Secular Heroine," in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honour of Jess B. Bessinger*, ed. Damico and Layerle (1993). More generally Woolf, "Saints' Lives."

insightfully interpret this juxtaposition of Adam and Guthlac to set the latter up as a model for other 'less holy sons of Adam'.<sup>748</sup> Calder's interpretation would also seem to support the Exeter anthologist's layout, for the sequence from *Christ I, II & III* to *Guthlac A & B*, could also be read to complement a progression from Christ's model to Guthlac's. Nevertheless, Guthlac displays abilities and qualities which bear resemblance to Christ in order to establish a continuation of sanctity, as was the convention in the hagiography which the *B* poet used as his source. This is why *Guthlac B* begins with a brief summary of Guthlac's miracles before recording how the Holy Spirit, an angel and the *manus Dei* came to give Guthlac hope throughout his suffering; these are all things that prove God's favour.<sup>749</sup> Guthlac's devotion throughout his illness both to his faith and to his attendant and his personal fortitude encourages further comparisons. So too does the attendant's use of the titles *windryhten min*, *fæder*, and *freonda hleo* and Mussetter's suggestion that just like the offices of a true prophet, Guthlac's responses were designed to 'edify, console and exhort'.<sup>750</sup> In return for his devotion, Guthlac is afforded the prophetic knowledge that he will not suffer overlong in this life and will be reunited with his beloved Lord in eight days as a reward for his faith and fortitude. An audience familiar with hagiography would expect these comparisons to be made as further assurance that this subject adhered to a recognized pattern, even though it had been altered.

The arrangement and structure of time in *Guthlac B*, for instance, appears to support an allegorical reading of Guthlac's exemplary death because his sickness is recorded to have struck him just prior to Easter.<sup>751</sup> Olsen has argued that the structure of *Guthlac B* was distorted in order to divide the poem into three sections that focus upon the Fall of Mankind, Guthlac's death and his attendant's sorrow.<sup>752</sup> *Guthlac B* opens with the explanation that the disobedience of Adam and Eve dually caused their banishment and the entrance of Death into the world, necessitating Christ's sacrifice. Here the *B* poet utilizes the metaphor of the *biter drync*, made by Eve for Adam, as the vehicle by which death occurs. T.D. Hill's analysis of the *B* poem's opening then clarifies the purpose for this by explaining that Creation prefigures Advent, just as Adam prefigures and makes possible Jesus, and Guthlac as a 'second Adam'.<sup>753</sup> The metaphor of the *biter drync* importantly foreshadows the *B* poet's focus upon Guthlac's death, for Guthlac's

<sup>748</sup> Calder, "Theme and Strategy in *Guthlac B*," p. 239.

<sup>749</sup> Felix only records Guthlac's admission to Beccles that he has been visited by an angel every morning and evening, not that the Holy Spirit is present nor that the *manus Dei* has made an appearance such as it did to mark the door behind which he was born; VG, IV-VI, L. The OEM strangely records the miraculous hand as Guthlac's only miracle; Kotzor, ed., *OE Martyrologium*, II, n.63.

<sup>750</sup> GB, II. 1011-13b; Langen, "Thesis," p. 84 and Mussetter, "Types as Prophet in the Old English *Guthlac B*," pp. 46-7.

<sup>751</sup> Felix records that Guthlac's sickness began on the Wednesday before Easter and ended eight days later, on the fourth day of the Easter festival; VG, L. Guthlac's feast date is April 11<sup>th</sup> in the *Old English Martyrology* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* supplies the year 714, though Easter that year occurred on Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 75.

<sup>752</sup> Olsen, *Heroic Hagiography*, p. 70. All of these elements are recorded in Felix, though their emphasis differs and significant omissions have been made.

<sup>753</sup> Hill points out that Jesus is identified as the second Adam in 1 Corinthians 15.45; Thomas D. Hill, "The First Beginning and the Purest Earth: *Guthlac B*, Lines 1-14," *Notes and Queries* 28, no. 5 (1981), p. 389.

recognition of it provides him with foreknowledge of his own impending death.<sup>754</sup> This motif serves as a reminder that death, or its bitter drink, affects everyone so that the only hope humans have, according to the *B* poet, is in the saints who have done God's will, as the first humans should have.<sup>755</sup>

The *B* poet even assures his audience that it matters not whether conversion happens early or late in one's life; a chord which resonates with both *Guthlac A* and what Felix tells us about Guthlac's own conversion.<sup>756</sup> Guthlac's example, in *Guthlac B*, then extrapolates upon how it is possible for a person to reach heaven through good works, with marked emphasis upon dying well. The *B* poet envisions Guthlac's death as another battle because it was a final remnant of this world and its outcome can then be seen to reveal God's purpose. Moreover, the characterization of Death as a stealthy warrior attacking Guthlac's body creatively enacts the battle truths known from both secular combat and from Scripture.<sup>757</sup> Langen even views Death's characterization as derived from one Scriptural precedent in particular; the role of Job's tempter, used to bring the strength of Guthlac's character to light since *Guthlac B* has no demonic attackers in this work.<sup>758</sup> The vivid image of Death approaching in the night and piercing the saint with arrows provides Guthlac with the knowledge that he has eight days of suffering remaining, supported by God through signs, until his spirit may depart. Consequently, the last day in which Guthlac is shot with arrows is the seventh day. This is also explained to be the day in which the 'treasury of his spirit was unlocked, having been probed with cunning keys'.<sup>759</sup> Thomas D. Hill's article on this numerology identifies that the eighth day in which Guthlac's soul departs could have been meant by the *B* poet to represent the Sabbath, for in the model of Christ's Passion, Guthlac also suffered for seven days before his soul departed.<sup>760</sup>

Guthlac's ability to predict and fulfil his own death has been explored more fully in an insightful new article by Peter Lucas which relates Guthlac's time frame more particularly to Christ's in the liturgy for Easter Sunday. He identifies that the *B* poet includes the description that on the day when Jesus accomplished the Resurrection of the body and Harrowed hell, Guthlac

<sup>754</sup> *GB*, ll. 819-71a, 980b-2a; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 108-9, 112. Also Rosier, "Death and Transfiguration in *Guthlac B*," p. 85.

<sup>755</sup> Eve first serves the drink in *GB*, ll. 865-70a; Guthlac recognizes its bitterness, ll. 976-93a; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 112. Gregory's Homily for the Thursday after Easter on John XX. 11-8 (Hom. 25, *PL* 76.1194AB) was widely distributed due to its inclusion in the Homiliary of Paul the Deacon. Hall also identifies other analogues in Gregory's *Moralia In Job*, XII.32.37 on Job XV.14; *Beowulf*, l. 769a; *Andreas*, l. 1526b; *Maxims*, l. 78; *Genesis & Exodus*, ll. 319-22, Bede's hymn to Sts. Peter and Paul and his *Vita Cuthberti*, XXIX; Thomas N. Hall, "A Gregorian Model for Eve's Biter Drync in *Guthlac B*," *Review of English Studies* 44, no. 174 (1993), pp. 159-61, 167-8, 174.

<sup>756</sup> *GB*, ll. 871b-78a; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 271; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 109.

<sup>757</sup> Rosier, "Death and Transfiguration in *Guthlac B*," pp. 86-7. Also Dubs, "*Guthlac A and the Acquisition of Wisdom*," p. 48.

<sup>758</sup> Langen, "Thesis," p. 81.

<sup>759</sup> *GB*, ll. 1141b-44a; 'Com se seofeða dæg/ ældum ondweard þæs þe him in gesonc/ hat, heortan neah, hildescurun,/ flacor flanbracu, feorhord onleac/ searocægum gesoht.' Trans. in Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 277; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 117.

<sup>760</sup> Thomas D. Hill, "The Typology of the Week and the Numerical Study of the Old English of *Guthlac B*," *Mediaeval Studies* 37 (1975), pp. 532, 535-6.

was able to arise and preach.<sup>761</sup> Furthermore, he considers the language used frequently for rising or arising in *Guthlac B* has the dual interpretation of describing the raising of bodies and all souls, with reference to Christ's Harrowing and Guthlac's sermon to his attendant containing the term *sigortacnum*; 'revelations of victory'.<sup>762</sup> There are also similarities between Christ's and Guthlac's death as the *B* poet emphasizes the sixth hour as Guthlac's most trying time which Lucas suggests was influenced by John 19.14 description of this hour as the time when Jesus was condemned to death. What is more, the earth shakes at his death like the description in Matthew 38.2.<sup>763</sup> Lucas further supports his argument by highlighting references to the sensory aspects of the Easter service which serve as symbols of Christ's triumph. Guthlac is called *heofonlic condel*, a symbol for the light of Christ, and his home is lit by a 'fiery tower' at his death, permeated by angelic melody and sweet odours which Lucas suggests were intended to be reminiscent of choir and incense.<sup>764</sup> These signs and symbols for Holy Saturday mark Guthlac's passing at dawn on the eighth day and while many are present in Felix's description of Guthlac's death, their arrangement according to the service appears to have been developed by the author of *Guthlac B*.

Studies and source analyses of *Guthlac B* have highlighted an equally substantial number of interpretations and allusions that would have ensured this poem's relevance for the monks who copied it into the Exeter book. While a Benedictine context has been more directly argued for *Guthlac A*, it is clear from these analyses of *Guthlac B* that the ideas and doctrines that it illustrated would have remained pertinent to this manuscript's audience, maybe even for use on a particular liturgical date. The *B* poem re-envisioned a particular narrative aspect of the Latin *vita* by infusing it with allusions to other Christian sources, proving not only Latin literacy but a familiarity with hagiographical convention and Cynewulfian poetic transformations of it. That *Guthlac B* does not intend to function merely as a vernacular translation of Guthlac's death scene is proven by the infusion of heroic terminology and the vivid characterizations of Death, the attendant and sister. It is these very aspects, moreover, that make *Guthlac B* such a hauntingly poignant work.

The numerous analyses of *Guthlac B*, like its predecessor *Guthlac A*, reveal an overwhelming historiography that recognizes the influence of both heroic imagery and other textual Christian sources integrated into a narrative episode. Sometimes comparisons between

<sup>761</sup> *GB*, ll. 1110, 1101, 1104; Peter J. Lucas, "Easter, the Death of St Guthlac and the Liturgy for Holy Saturday in Felix's *Vita* and the Old English *Guthlac B*," *Medium Ævum* 61, no. 1 (1992), pp. 3, 5. Also Olsen, *Heroic Hagiography*, p. 85.

<sup>762</sup> *GB*, ll. 1116; Lucas, "Easter, the Death of St Guthlac and the Liturgy for Holy Saturday in Felix's *Vita* and the Old English *Guthlac B*," pp. 3-5. Again, these events are foreshadowed by the three *Christ* poems of the Exeter book, also described as Advent, Ascension and Judgement.

<sup>763</sup> *GB*, ll. 1150b-51a, 1325b-26b; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 278, 282; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 116, 122. Lucas, "Easter, the Death of St Guthlac and the Liturgy for Holy Saturday in Felix's *Vita* and the Old English *Guthlac B*," pp. 6, 11-2.

<sup>764</sup> *GB*, ll. 1290, 1309-11, 1305-24a; Lucas, "Easter, the Death of St Guthlac and the Liturgy for Holy Saturday in Felix's *Vita* and the Old English *Guthlac B*," pp. 8-12. Odour of sanctity is also identified in Gregory's *Moralia in Job*, V.33.50, as identified by Langen, "Thesis," p. 98, though it also is a hagiographical convention by this time prevalent in the accounts of saints' deaths.

these traditions are explicitly juxtaposed so that the audience is made clear of the correct position while at other times it appears as though heroic concepts are employed to envision Guthlac's battles according to these standards. Such inventions clearly reflect the poets' independent designs to develop the Guthlac narrative into something new, for a purpose that remains unclear due to the paucity of comparable texts and established conventions. What is more, many of the sources that have been variously proposed for the Exeter book Guthlac poems are actually independent of Felix's *vita*, strongly supporting that these two poets had received a monastic education that would have brought them exposure to the kinds of sources; liturgical, biblical and hagiographical, that have been considered influences or models. Significantly, these poems display the influence of apocryphal sources which supplemented explanations to some of the most popular narrative episodes of the legend. These explanations and themes indicate that it was the instructive potential of these episodes that was wanted, not another proclamation of Guthlac's sanctity. It further reflects upon the abilities of these poems' audience that they would have been expected to recognize well-known episodes or ideas interwoven into each composition because contrast and juxtaposition were didactically employed to be instructive. Once a monastery was founded at Crowland, it can be shown that it copied and perpetuated Felix's *vita* so that vernacular materials such as these must have been created elsewhere, to meet different needs.

The analyses of the Exeter book poems are altogether more reliant upon allusions and similarities than the direct textual quotations that define the genre Felix used, particularly since their genre does not indicate their function. In this, they may seem stylistically quite different to the analyses which have been undertaken for the Vercelli, Vespasian and *Martyrology* materials which are recognizably liturgical and hagiographical. It has been shown by Roberts, Kotzor and others how the authors of Vercelli homily XXIII and the Old English *Martyrology* entry for April 11<sup>th</sup> selected and developed particular details for the specific liturgical purpose at hand. Moreover, the survival of the Vercelli homily and Gonser's subsequent identification of its relationship to the Vespasian translation may provide a tantalizing example of how selections from the Old English *life* could be adapted for liturgical readings.

The Vespasian translation of Felix's *vita* also stands alone as a vernacular hagiographical text that imitates its Latin exemplar almost exactly, to a degree not imitated in other Old English saints' *lives*. Because so many studies of the Guthlacian materials pass over this text for this very reason, Whatley's article is hugely important to our understanding of the possible function and audience of this text and its relevance to our understanding of its role amongst other vernacular creations. By Ælfric's time, there were Catholic Homilies composed in the vernacular for public or private reading that provided something morally suitable in an age where one could not be sure that the priest knew Latin well enough to translate the meaning.<sup>765</sup> Ælfric's own

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<sup>765</sup> Clemoes, "Ælfric," pp. 179, 181.

teacher had only partially understood it, after all, encouraging him to compose works of pure doctrine which were expressed *con simplex locutio* for an uneducated audience.<sup>766</sup> If, as Whatley argues, censorship was also an important aspect of non-Ælfrician vernacular texts, then the omissions identified between the *Vespasian life* and its Latin source may provide a clear example of what its author deemed relevant for his audience. It also shows that others were working with the same considerations in mind. The author of the *Vespasian life* intended a translation which imitated its Latin text in all but its dispute of Guthlac's abilities and accompanying lay disbelief. Thus, the *Vespasian* omissions imply that a delicate knowledge of these concerns was not considered present in this text's intended audience.

The implications of censorship in vernacular texts strongly suggest that interest in saints' *lives* was for a broader cross-section of people that might have included illiterate ecclesiastics and possibly even some interested, and literate, laity. The sheer number and range of vernacular materials to have survived evidence that Guthlac was considered an important enough subject to retain, and one whose model could be variously interpreted to different functions. Furthermore, the vernacular variations bear witness that the Guthlac legend was perpetuated in ways that have not survived for any of his contemporaries. Perhaps, as chapter 5 will consider, there was a popular appeal to the repentant warlord-turned hermit's tale which made it valuable material for monks to develop to suit various purposes.

### **The Norman Developments and the Longchamp Revival**

The Norman developments and the conspicuous revitalization that took place during the abbacy of Henry Longchamp are here combined due to one obvious similarity; all of these materials were created after we can be certain that there was a monastery at Crowland. In fact, more can be said about the function and audience of these materials than those produced previously simply because more information is provided in the texts themselves. Orderic Vitalis explains that he composed an *Abbrevatio* of Felix's *vita* and a history of Crowland for Prior Wulfwin while visiting Crowland at Abbot Geoffrey's request for five weeks, probably sometime between 1114-23.<sup>767</sup> An anonymous *Translatio* and separate *Miracula* contained in Crowland's Douai MS 352 relate the exemplary efforts of Abbot Waltheof and Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, and later, Abbots Ulfecetyl and Ingulph in propagating the cult.<sup>768</sup> Under Abbot Ingulph too, was Crowland's *Chronicle* begun to record the abbey's history, benefactors, estates and possessions, though it sadly survives only in a later, much-revised version.<sup>769</sup> By the end of the twelfth century and entering the thirteenth, Abbot Henry sought new Latin compositions to promote St Guthlac's

<sup>766</sup> Ibid, pp. 189, 193.

<sup>767</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, vol. I, p. 28, vol. II, book IV, pp. 350-1.

<sup>768</sup> Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Aprilis* II, pp. 37-60. *PVG*, Appendix III, p. 722.

<sup>769</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p.1; Proney and Cox, eds., *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-86*. The complex dating issues and theories regarding this text were treated in Chapter 2.

posthumous glory and his apparent foundation of Crowland Abbey. He commissioned yet another epitome of Felix's *vita* from Peter de Blois around 1200 and then from Peter's text, Henry de Avranches was commissioned to compose a metrical *vita* between 1220-33.<sup>770</sup> The most notable common attribute amongst these materials is that they were commissioned by Crowland ecclesiastics who identified a particular need at Crowland and either assigned or imported the right person to create a new Latin composition to meet that need. Consequently, these materials must reflect the interests of Crowland Abbey though to dismiss their contribution to our understanding of the cult there would be to disregard the alterations made to the content, style, sources, language and treatment of the Guthlac legend and the relevance of these modifications. Identifiable variations inform us about the changing priorities of these materials' admittedly monastic audience and provide a fuller picture of this cult's trajectory.

Regrettably, less work has been dedicated to considering the function of alterations in these new Latin compositions than upon identifying their relationship to their ultimate source; Felix's *vita*. W.F. Bolton in the preface to his 1954 Princeton doctoral thesis recorded his intention to later 'trace the development of the Guthlac legend and draw...conclusions regarding the theory and intent of medieval hagiographical literature', since his scope became necessarily limited to providing editions to five rare, flawed or unpublished texts.<sup>771</sup> Bolton did later compile a reader of medieval literature from which such deductions might have been implied, however, the articles derived from his doctoral research; 'The Croyland quatrefoil and the Polychronicon' (1958), 'The Latin Revisions of Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*' (1959) and 'The Background and Meaning of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*' (1962) do not meet the need for conclusions regarding the 'theory and intent' of the Guthlac dossier, either over time or in its entirety.<sup>772</sup> Other observations on these texts made by Colgrave and Jane Roberts were likewise limited in scope.<sup>773</sup> Nevertheless, Bolton's 'Latin Revisions' article does analyze alterations made amongst the Latin epitomes and has been cited as the definitive analysis of Peter of Blois and Henry of Avranches.<sup>774</sup> Further studies of Orderic Vitalis and Henry of Avranches' writings have been notably undertaken by M. Chibnall and J.C. Russell though their focus was again not exclusively upon the Guthlac material.<sup>775</sup> Consequently, this section is intended to remedy this oversight by tracing the Guthlac narrative through the establishment and persistent rebuilding of a monastery at Crowland. It will also consider how alterations to the legend might reflect the concerns and interests of the abbey from the late eleventh to the mid-thirteenth centuries, in chronological order.

<sup>770</sup> Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, pp. 105-8; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 22-3.

<sup>771</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," pp. i-ii.

<sup>772</sup> Bolton, "The Croyland Quatrefoil and *Polychronicon*," Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," W.F. Bolton, "The Background and Meaning of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*," *Journal of English and German Philology* lxi (1962).

<sup>773</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 1-25; Colgrave, "St Guthlac of Crowland: A Durham Incident," Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 205-8, 210-3; Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," pp. 71-2, 86.

<sup>774</sup> For example, Roberts, "Hagiography and Literature," p. 72.

<sup>775</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE* and Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*.



Of all of these Latin materials, Orderic Vitalis' *Abbrevatio* was perhaps the most influential and not only on account of its famous authorship. When Orderic Vitalis records that he was invited to Crowland by Abbot Geoffrey and then asked to write a summary of Felix's *vita* by Prior Wulfwin, one must assume that there was a reason for the original invitation. Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* had been written in the 730s and while it utilized sufficient amounts of hagiographical topoi and prerequisites to get the cult established, Crowland's community must have noted some glaring issues with this ancient text. The first problem, which scholarly Orderic himself complained of, has already been oft-referenced; Felix's *vita* was written in a verbose, antiquated style.<sup>776</sup> Another issue certainly must have been that a new Latin composition was long overdue and the imposition of Norman ecclesiastics at Crowland, like elsewhere, renewed interest in hagiographical documentation of Anglo-Saxon saints.<sup>777</sup> However, the most resounding lacking of Felix's *vita* must have been his silence regarding any monastic settlement at Crowland.

As noted in Chapter 3, Crowland was likely facing significant external pressure due to competition and internal pressure from new leadership within the community by this time. The *Historia Croilandensis* describes the numerous injustices and injuries dealt the abbey by Norman Earl Ivo Taillebois, the most notable being the loss of their cell at Spalding, and Abbot Ulfcetyl's demotion and removal to Glastonbury.<sup>778</sup> Less is said about the situation within the community since Ingulph, the supposed author of the *Historia*, was appointed Ulfcetyl's successor. It is also important to remember that alongside these pressures, Crowland had to face the repeated destruction of their abbey, including its documented history and charters, all within fifty years. Consequently, it can come as no surprise that one of Crowland's community, perhaps Prior Wulfwin, as Orderic records, thought it pertinent for the abbey to request that their foundation legend be prominently attached to the *vita* of their patron saint. In fact, the foundation legend attached by Orderic to his *Abbrevatio* of Felix's *vita* is the earliest surviving authentic account of Crowland's foundation legend, since the *Historia Croilandensis* is considered a later forgery. For this reason alone would Orderic's summary be invaluable to our understanding of Crowland's projected image.

Orderic's prefacing remarks to his *Abbrevatio* of Felix's *vita* helpfully divulge his reason for being at Crowland, his objective and his opinion of his exemplar.<sup>779</sup> W.F. Bolton interpreted these prefatory remarks as indicative of Orderic's purpose to revise Felix's text in order to 'maintain its attractiveness' for future generations and 'in turn to preserve its usefulness.'<sup>780</sup>

<sup>776</sup> 'edidit gesta sanctissimi anchoritae prolixo et aliquantulum obscuro dictatu'; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, Book IV, pp. 322-3.

<sup>777</sup> Orderic explains that 'Indubitanter credo quod non minus proderunt fidelibus Cisalpinis sancta gesta transmarinorum Saxonum vel Anglorum, quam Græcorum vel Ægyptiorum...Præterea reor quod quanto res hæc minus olim nostratibus patuit tanto karitatis igne ferventibus et pro transactis reatibus ex intimo corde dolentibus gratiosius placebit.' Ibid, p. 324.

<sup>778</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*.

<sup>779</sup> Orderic also explains that he has included his *Abbrevatio* of Felix in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* because Earl Waltheof, whom he had just finished writing about, was a patron of this abbey prior to his internment there; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 322-5.

<sup>780</sup> Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," pp. 38-9.

Examining Orderic's revisions should consequently reveal what aspects of Felix's narrative he considered 'useful' enough to revise and keep. His summary begins exactly where Felix's does, without the preface, though he amalgamates all the chapter headings into a fluid block and cuts what he considered superfluous details. Bolton identifies these redundant details as Felix's 'subjective content', his elaborate reckoning of time and his 'catalogues' of virtues.<sup>781</sup> It is even superficially evident that Orderic's writing style is direct and focused with few deviations and no commentary or lengthy descriptive passages. When one compares the two texts, it is clear that Orderic pared down to a more basic narrative until the point where Guthlac enters Repton, when descriptions of his exemplary self-denial and devotions survive despite their respective emphases in Felix.<sup>782</sup> Perhaps Orderic felt it was more suitable for his monastic audience to meditate upon Guthlac's time at Repton rather than his life prior to this. So too must descriptions of Crowland's landscape, Guthlac's lifestyle, his persecutions at the hands of its demonic inhabitants and Bedan death scene have been kept intact because they highlight exemplary particulars which, by Bolton's reckoning, would still be 'useful' to the monks that claimed to live in imitation of their founder.<sup>783</sup> Nor does the directness of this epitome make for stimulating reading with its 'and-then-he' momentum.

When it comes to the later episodes from Guthlac's *vita* which involve miracles or prophecies, Orderic sometimes omits the steps which led to their realization so that in the episode relating the miraculous retrieval of a stolen document, he simply states that '*idem scriptori mesto saluam reddidit*' without explaining that Guthlac had foreknowledge of its location and that another monk was sent in the direction of where to retrieve it.<sup>784</sup> Another instance relates how Guthlac told '*cuidam abbati qui ad eum causa piæ locutionis venerat de duobus clericis*' but did not divulge how they lied to their abbot when he questioned them nor their eventual confession and reconciliation.<sup>785</sup> Some of these deletions might have resonated with those omitted by Bede from the Anonymous' monk of Lindisfarne's *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* which Alan Thacker suggested may have adapted St Cuthbert from a local model into a more universal exemplar.<sup>786</sup> Yet the overall intention of Orderic's revisions of Felix is not always clear and we cannot be sure of the reasoning behind his omission of essential narrative components that attest to Guthlac's miraculous abilities. It would appear that in his direct language and concise editing, Orderic was not careful with preserving the meaning of these episodes.

<sup>781</sup> Ibid, pp. 39-40.

<sup>782</sup> Felix fills nineteen chapters with Guthlac's early years and militaristic exploits but only five chapters with his time at Repton; VG, I-XXIV, Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 72-85. Bolton identifies that Guthlac's 'catalogue' of virtues is shortened to just his abstinence from liquor and diligence in study; Bolton, "Thesis," p. 39.

<sup>783</sup> VG, XXXIV describing how Guthlac's hut was invaded by demons in the form of beasts is a notable exception, perhaps omitted because it did not contain original material but rather an episode heavily influenced by the *Vita Antonii*. Also see Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 40.

<sup>784</sup> 'Guthlac restored it safely to the anxious scribe'; trans. Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 328-9.

<sup>785</sup> 'a certain abbot who was visiting him for holy discourse all the details of the behaviour of two clerks'; Ibid, pp. 330-1.

<sup>786</sup> Alan Thacker, "Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert," in *St Cuthbert: His Cult and Community to A.D. 1200*, ed. David Rollason Gerald Bonner, Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: 1989).

Orderic's most relevant contribution to our understanding of Crowland's cult is to be found in the material which he affixes to his *Abbrevatio*; material that he conventionally attests he learned from '*Ansgoti subprioris aliorumque proferam seniorum*'.<sup>787</sup> He begins his account of Crowland's history by explaining that while he was alive, Guthlac had asked Æthelbald for a *quietam mansionem* on Crowland island that he '*ea quae beato viro iam regnum adeptus donaverat servientibus ei perenniter concessit*'.<sup>788</sup> The dimensions of the land are provided, as is the confirmation that it was granted by a charter, witnessed and sealed before bishops and lay lords. He even related the problems in replacing Guthlac's former wooden oratory with a greater stone church and that the building was furnished with holy men, trappings and estates by the king once it was finished. The intention of this material must have been to show how all these things were accomplished by King Æthelbald to ensure that his audience was aware of Crowland's ancient claims to its location and holdings. Indeed, he boldly claims that '*nec unquam post primam instaurationem quam idem rex fecit sedes Crulandiae religiosorum habitatione monachorum usque in hodiernum diem caruit*' though he is only able to provide the name of one abbot in the two hundred years since it was supposedly founded; the name Kenulph from one of Crowland's boundary stones.<sup>789</sup> Clearly, Orderic was interested in relating all the practicalities necessitated by the site's transformation from hermitage to monastery in order to show how this was possible. One could almost imagine Orderic being shown round the supposed 'ancient proofs' of the church's wooden under-piling or the Deeping boundary marker by monks eager to validate the old stories of what had recently been lost in what would be Crowland's first disastrous fire. Such a narrative would have been keenly desired by Crowland's monks to remedy their own recently lost archives and for wider dissemination amongst would-be patrons and for legal disputes. While it is clear that there were some reservations with Felix's *vita* by this time, Orderic's enthusiasm from this point in his composition implies that the inclusion of foundation material was the real reason behind his commission.

The interest of this material to Crowland's monks and their projected image was further enhanced by Orderic Vitalis' history of its abbots that were more recent and therefore, better known to establish the continuity of this site. The first abbot to which Orderic is able to ascribe much information to is the mid-tenth century abbot Thurketyl, the former chancellor to King Eadred. This is significant because Thurketyl is mentioned to have been the friend of Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester and Oswald bishop of Worcester and later Archbishop of York, so that those reading Orderic's version were sure that Thurketyl and consequently Crowland were at the forefront of the new Benedictine reforms. In addition, Orderic's portrayal of Thurketyl is noticeably hagiographical; he was of royal blood, was related to

<sup>787</sup> 'subprior Ansgot and other senior monks'; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>788</sup> 'there granted in perpetuity to those who guarded it everything that he had given the saint himself when he won his kingdom.' Trans., *Ibid*, pp. 338-9.

<sup>789</sup> 'and from the day of its first foundation by the king to the present the island of Crowland has never been without holy monks'; *Ibid*, pp. 340-1. Fig. 23.

Archbishop Oscytel of York, and possessed many estates but that he also gallantly desired to join the monks who inhabited the Fens makes his sacrifice all the more noble. As does the rather dubious statement that he repopulated the community and rose in its ranks until he was elected abbot.<sup>790</sup> Abbots Ingulph and Geoffrey, as Crowland's first two Norman abbots, also have rather detailed entries. Orderic tells us, for instance, that Ingulph was crippled with gout towards the end of his life but still actively worked his mind for the betterment of the community by translating Earl Waltheof's body from the chapter house to the church.<sup>791</sup> Ingulph was then succeeded by Geoffrey about whom Orderic relates substantial details due to the fact that Geoffrey had been prior of Orderic's house, Saint-Évroul, before coming to England. Thus Orderic records not only where Geoffrey was from, but details particular to his monastic vocation such as where he first took his vows, the name of his abbot there, and his promotions culminating in his promotion to the abbacy at Crowland.<sup>792</sup> Accounts such as these provide reliable factual information about Crowland's Norman abbots where the pseudo-Ingulph's account has been called into doubt. They also inform us of the distaste in which Ulfcetyl was held by the current administration. No mention is made of his translation or other efforts.<sup>793</sup>

However, it is not just hagiographical descriptions of these abbots which Orderic is setting forth for posterity but the notable acquisitions and benefactions that they also secured during their abbacies. Thurketyl provided Crowland with six estates from his own patrimony and Oscytel's sister, Lady Leofgifu of Eynesbury, brought the remains of St Neot to Crowland because '*digniores se credebat tradidit*.'<sup>794</sup> It is also not surprising that we find for the first time a hagiographical account of St Pega, in the context of Peakirk's Abbot Wulfgeat petitioning King Edward to unite Crowland and Peakirk underneath him.<sup>795</sup> Perhaps the pseudo-Ingulph had not yet begun the *Historia Croilandensis* by the time that Orderic visited, so that Orderic's account must have been encouraged to contain the most pertinent verifications of the possessions which might entice much-needed revenue.

It is also rather suggestive of Crowland's direction by this time that the focus during this part of Orderic's narrative appears to be upon the Earl Waltheof, rather than Guthlac. The Earl is referred to as benefactor during the church rebuilding that occurred under Abbot Ulfketyl and it is this abbot who is then recorded in turn to have procured Waltheof's body for Crowland's chapter house with the King and his wife's permission.<sup>796</sup> This is even more interesting since we know that Ulfcetyl was demoted and sent to Glastonbury at Ingulph's arrival. Ingulph is noted to have

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<sup>790</sup> Ibid, pp. 340-3.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid, pp. 344-7.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid, pp. 346-9.

<sup>793</sup> Specifically the *Miracula et Translatio* which have survived only in Douai MS 852; Bollandus and others, eds., *Acta Sanctorum*.

<sup>794</sup> 'she believed them more worthy.' Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 342-3.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid, pp. 344-5.

<sup>796</sup> The Earl Waltheof was beheaded on May 31<sup>st</sup> 1076 according to Orderic and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, D, noted by Chibnall in Ibid, pp. 344-5, esp. n.1.

disinterred the body to find it had not decayed, moving it into the church near the altar.<sup>797</sup> Then significantly, Orderic records that in the third year of Geoffrey's abbacy, many miracles were performed at the Earl's tomb, including the ominous striking down of a Norman monk who dared ridicule the corpse and those who believed in its efficacy. Geoffrey was even granted an explanatory vision in which the apostle Bartholomew and Guthlac stood on either side of Waltheof's coffin, confirming his powers in light of that monk's death.<sup>798</sup> No other miracles or signs are attributed to Guthlac in Orderic's narrative history; a fact which seems to suggest that he had been eclipsed by their newest acquisition; the preserved remains of the Earl. Indeed, Orderic attaches to his summary not an original composition on Guthlac but a brief epitaph in heroic verse for Waltheof.<sup>799</sup>

Orderic Vitalis' writings on Guthlac consequently appear to have been too focused upon Crowland's lost history and their newest relic. Perhaps Crowland's late transition from hermitage to monastery meant that their founder, like his first *vita*, felt too distant to be a continued source of patronage. New ideas and emphases that came with regime changes may have proven more successful than others. For instance, consider the effort put into advertising Earl Waltheof as opposed to the other 'recent' acquisition of St Neot's relics. Perhaps the subordination of Guthlac as witness to Waltheof's sanctity in Geoffrey's vision accounts for the actual emphasis placed upon this relic during Geoffrey's abbacy, or at the very least, during Orderic Vitalis' visit. It is also possible that Orderic weighted this material according to his own interests. Whatever the reason, Orderic missed the mark with his *Abbrevatio* though his work did function as a hagiographical replacement for Felix's *vita*.

The *Historia Croilandensis*, on the other hand, cannot provide us with any authentic information about the abbey's interests up to the twelfth century, though it has almost exactly the same content. As if the dubious dating and authorial confession regarding the destruction of Crowland's records were not enough to undermine its authenticity, this *Historia* invents a significant amount of detail which cannot be verified by any other previous source. In fact, the pseudo-Ingulph has even copied sections intact from Orderic's account which further destabilizes its claims to having been composed by the abbot who was succeeded by Orderic's patron.<sup>800</sup> Even more curious is that if we consider the *Historia* to have been re-written or invented after the fire of 1091, why did it not use Peter de Blois' epitome, which has been widely accepted as the '*textus receptus*' at Crowland after 1200? Bolton shrewdly remarks that it 'hardly seems likely' that the pseudo-Ingulph 'would have made this subtle attempt at verisimilitude amid the many

<sup>797</sup> Ingulph's exhumation and translation must have occurred after his appointment in 1085 but prior to the 1091 fire. See *Ibid*, pp. 346-7 and Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 10-2.

<sup>798</sup> '*Acephalus non est.*' '*Comes hic fuit.*' '*At modo rex est.*' Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 348-9.

<sup>799</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 350-1.

<sup>800</sup> The first example of this that I found follows the pseudo-Ingulph's charter recording Æthelbald's donation. It is Orderic's description of Crowland's topography and explanation of the name; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 8-9 and Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 348-51. Bolton considers the Chronicle to depend equally upon Felix and Orderic; Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 41.

anachronisms and other blunders' yet we still cannot be sure whether the alterations and new material found within the *Historia Croilandensis* reflect the author's 'dissatisfaction' with these other sources.<sup>801</sup> The only way in which we can attempt to discern whether this was likely is to consider what aspects were enhanced or added to the Guthlac legend as set out in the *Historia Croilandensis*. To my knowledge, this has not been attempted for this text because of its disputed legitimacy. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to consider the new material here because even if it is a late creation, it provides the historian with a projected image of the abbey's interests and concerns at the disputable, though late, period in which this text was created.

At first glance, the *Historia Croilandensis* understandably presents a much longer account than Orderic of the abbey's history, though it was interspersed with historical events. Another noticeable reason why the *Historia* is so much longer is that it contains detailed charters, including lists of their witnesses, for the abbey's rights and privileges to certain lands and incomes. For instance, a lengthy charter granted by the Mercian King Bertulph relates certain injuries being inflicted upon Crowland's servants and livestock by enemies lying in wait along the river boundaries so that the king felt it justifiable to 'extend the privileges' granted by his predecessor, re-confirming Crowland's land and marsh boundaries in detail, their common right of pasture and protection for servants, repentant fugitives, and pilgrims within these bounds. This fictitious royal charter also confirms the land and chapel donations of the knights Fregist, Algar, and Oswy; the elder Earl Algar; the Countess Sigburga; the untitled Asketel, Wulget, Edulph, Geolph and Wulnoth and the sheriffs Siward and Thorold. It even concludes, like all the other charters included here, with the marks and names of its witnesses and is followed by an account of the council meeting itself, describing how Guthlac healed many present of an infirmity of their limbs through their handling and support of the petition rectified by this charter.<sup>802</sup> The structure and content of this episode is representative of the first four hundred years recorded in the *Historia*, though noticeably more narrative details begin to appear after the more plausible founding of the monastery in the mid-tenth century, just as they were in Orderic's epitome.<sup>803</sup> What is significant about this structure is that the charters, of which there are six pre-tenth century and four others up to Ingulph's abbacy, serve to attest that there was a community at Crowland from the 720s which possessed ancient claims to its lands and privileges.<sup>804</sup> The pseudo-Ingulph clearly wanted to emphasize this point due to the disputes which this text also testifies so resoundingly to.<sup>805</sup> This kind of information detailing Crowland's privileges, boundaries and who confirmed them was not included by Orderic Vitalis, suggesting that this was likely another of the factors that Crowland found disappointment with.

<sup>801</sup> Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 42; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 26-7; Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, pp. 107-8. Also Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 205-6.

<sup>802</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 24-31, 31-3.

<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60 and following.

<sup>804</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10, 12, 23, 35, 65, 81, 117, 128.

<sup>805</sup> For example, the second continuation by Anonymous describes a dispute with Spalding; *Ibid.*, p. 271 and following.

In order to present a more plausible history, the pseudo-Ingulph also had to provide a fuller chronology of pre-Norman abbots than has survived in any other account. Thus from the pseudo-Ingulph we first learn not only of Kenulph but of Patrick, Siward, Theodore, and Godric before those names which we already learned from Orderic's text; Thurketyl, Egelric, Egelric II, Osketyl, Godric II, Brihtmer, Wulfgeat and Ulfcetyl.<sup>806</sup> Substantially more information is provided regarding the legal disputes and monetary concerns which plagued the Norman abbots Ingulph, Geoffrey, Edward, Robert de Redingas and Henry de Longchamp, though this is to be expected in light of the fact that the pseudo-Ingulph and his continuators were likely writing closer to the actual events and so remembered more about them.<sup>807</sup> Curiously, even in these later accounts was material copied from Orderic, though this continuator claimed to be Peter de Blois who had been commissioned by Henry de Longchamp to write his own epitome of Felix's *vita*.<sup>808</sup> Continued reliance upon Orderic's epitome in the pseudo-Ingulph's continuators would appear to imply that this version, with its singular description of Crowland's boundaries and unsubstantiated claim that the site has been inhabited by monks since Guthlac's days, was not specific enough to have been of prolonged use to the community. Moreover, by filling the voids in the history of its abbots and by including detailed charters, we can be almost certain that very little, if any, of this information survived the 1091 fire, if it ever existed in the first place. The *Historia Croilandensis* was created by members of Crowland's community to set forth their official version of its history, not a lot of which is relevant for determining changing perceptions of Guthlac's cult.

Indeed, the *Historia Croilandensis* relates only two new miracles to Guthlac over the centuries, being preoccupied with the abbey's history and benefactions but more often, their legal disputes. The first miracle attributed to Guthlac by the pseudo-Ingulph relates how many, including the archbishop of Canterbury, were healed of paralysis at a council of King Bertulph in 851 when they agreed to grant a charter to protect Crowland's privileges.<sup>809</sup> This episode only then continues that all those present at the council vowed to make a pilgrimage to St Guthlac's church; an action which was apparently mirrored by 'innumerable multitudes of the sick, from throughout the whole land'.<sup>810</sup> The point of this miracle appears, like its opening account of Bertulph's council, to have been to substantiate Crowland's privileges and encourage new ones for its ending concludes not that Crowland became an established centre for pilgrimage but that the community became rich in wealth and in property through the influx of pilgrims. Quite obviously there is little in this episode that could not have been intended for a Crowland audience, though it claims that up to six hundred pilgrims were cured daily.

<sup>806</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-147; Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, book IV, pp. 340-7.

<sup>807</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 147-223, 240-70, 273-82, 284-322. A good discussion of the latest entries not touched upon in this thesis was undertaken by Proney and Cox, eds., *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-86*.

<sup>808</sup> For example, compare Geoffrey's vision in Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 348-9; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 242-3.

<sup>809</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*; the healing at royal council, pp. 31-4; Bertulph's charter, pp. 34-5.

<sup>810</sup> Trans. by Ibid, p. 33. Also, pilgrims mentioned, p. 112.

It seems that the second miracle recorded by the *Historia* occurred long after, during Ingulph's abbacy; a fact that suggests that their patron's continued involvement was not as important to this text's function as its verifications of property were. This second miracle does not involve any more pilgrims or potential patrons than the first, describing Crowland's monks as both the witnesses and beneficiaries. The narrator explains that a winter storm and depletion of stores threatened famine for Crowland's community. Ingulph, the new abbot, spent the night in prayer at Guthlac's tomb and, after the morning service, heard a voice commanding him to prepare bread. The assembled monks opened the door to find two bags of corn and two of flour for which they proceeded to offer thanks to their saint for providing sustenance for his servants in their time of need.<sup>811</sup> Both of these miracles seem to suggest that Guthlac was becoming less potent. He certainly was never effectively used as a vengeful protector like St Cuthbert was by Durham's community.<sup>812</sup> Even Guthlac's appearances in the visions of abbots Ingulph and Geoffrey, though they obviously influenced each other, provide nothing of the same power or insight that was granted the future king Æthelbald.<sup>813</sup> It is obvious that by the time the *Historia Croilandensis* was being compiled and continued upon that Guthlac was viewed with less potency than the pre-Conquest materials written about him. He was, however, still of continued use to his community as their holy patron and founder, to whom the community, appealed in their times of need. Perhaps Guthlac was re-appropriated specifically for his monks in light of the acquisition of Waltheof, who seems to have been a popular political martyr for the laity at least during the abbacies of Ulfcetyl, Ingulph and Geoffrey, while England was settling under Norman rule.

The emphasis changed again, by the time we reach the abbacy of Henry de Longchamp at the end of the twelfth century. After Henry's appointment, numerous developments occurred which testify to his personal enthusiasm for developing Crowland into a major pilgrimage centre. The *Historia Croilandensis* relates how Henry sold one of the abbey's plantations of alders in order to pay his debt to the king and in the same year, translated Guthlac's body into a more ornate shrine to a different spot within the church.<sup>814</sup> This account may also supply the reason why Henry de Longchamp was orchestrating a translation of the saint only sixty years after the last one; the abbot was indebted to King Richard I for settling in his favour a major dispute with Spalding regarding ownership of the marshes.<sup>815</sup> The earlier translation which occurred under Ulfcetyl was also not advertised by the early Norman abbots who instead focused upon Waltheof. Nor did Henry neglect Crowland's other relics, translating Sts. Neot and Waltheof's remains

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<sup>811</sup> Ibid, pp. 191-3.

<sup>812</sup> Victoria Tudor, "The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century: The Evidence of Reginald of Durham," in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to A.D. 1200*, ed. Claire Stancliffe, Gerald Bonner, David Rollason (Woodbridge: 1989), pp. 447-67. The only example that I found of Guthlac striking down anyone who questioned his sanctity is to be found in Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 241-2.

<sup>813</sup> VG, LII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 164-7; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 151-2, 242-3.

<sup>814</sup> The translation occurred on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1196; Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 295.

<sup>815</sup> The significance of this case can be testified to by its prominence as the first, and the longest, narrative episode that was recorded about Henry de Longchamp; Ibid, pp. 282-95.



before 1213.<sup>816</sup> These translations must have advertised and effectively increased the numbers of pilgrims coming to Crowland because the pseudo-Peter of Blois' epitaph of Henry de Longchamp's death records that 'with great zeal on his part, he procured ecclesiastical ornaments and vessels of gold and silver, precious vestments, as well as books of the greatest beauty, and many other things that were requisite for the house of God. Besides this, nearly all the edifices, both within the abbey and without, on its manors, were in his time rebuilt and greatly improved.'<sup>817</sup> The forty-six year abbacy of Henry de Longchamp saw a marked increase in Crowland's fortunes which it will be shown was brought about partly through Henry's restoration of Guthlac as Crowland's principal saint.

That Henry sought to revitalize the cult of St Guthlac is no clearer than in the prominence given Guthlac's legend in visual representations over Waltheof or Neot. Guthlac's legend and image is prominently displayed on Crowland's grand western front and on his own seal.<sup>818</sup> The striking designs on the Harley Roll have also been argued by Warner, Henderson and Wormald to have been created to commemorate Henry's 1196 translation and opulent new shrine.<sup>819</sup> Moreover, the many textual materials which he commissioned can further be analyzed for indications of his particular aspirations and designs for this cult and for his house. Henry commissioned a new epitome from Peter de Blois of Felix's *vita* around the year 1200 and then provided Peter's epitome for Henry de Avranches to create a metrical *vita* sometime between 1220 and 1233.<sup>820</sup> It was also under him that the compilation of Crowland centred materials, now housed at Douai 852 was likely copied.

Peter's epitome provides remarkable insights into the perceived shortcomings of Orderic's earlier epitome and Crowland's needs because it survives as the first, full-length *vita* of St Guthlac to have been produced in the four hundred years since Felix first composed his *vita*. In the letters preserved in the *Historia Croilandensis*, Henry de Longchamp writes that Crowland's monks had already shortened Felix's lengthy *vita* and made a version that was more 'concise and better suited to weak understandings'. It is possible that this was Orderic's epitome since no other text matching these descriptions survives. The abbot then continues that he expressly desired something more beautifully written by one whom he flatters as the equal of Sulpicius Severus and Gregory the Great.<sup>821</sup> Though these letters have been altered to include a bogus request and acceptance for Peter to continue the *Historia Croilandensis* as well, many still consider Henry's

<sup>816</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>817</sup> Trans. by Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 321-2.

<sup>818</sup> See fig. 19, 32, to view these representations. Discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>819</sup> Warner, *The Harley Roll*, p. 17; Henderson, "Imagery of St Guthlac," p. 84; Wormald, *English Drawings*, p. 262.

<sup>820</sup> PVG, pp. 698-719; Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poem*, pp. 105-8; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 22-3; Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," pp. 44 and Roberts, "Inventory," pp. 205-8.

<sup>821</sup> Trans. by Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 224-9. The letter to Peter and Peter's response open the continuation begun by the pseudo-Peter of Blois around 1100, where the pseudo-Ingulph left off. Peter was paid a high compliment in these comparisons, argues Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, p. 108.

compliments and request to create a new epitome of Guthlac's *vita* to be genuine.<sup>822</sup> Orderic's epitome had simplified Felix's elaborate diction but it was not an enthusiastic rendering of the narrative. Thus Henry's request not to let Guthlac's merits slide into obscurity was based on his concern that Orderic's epitome was too simplistic and not elegant enough, though it had been famously authored. Peter, as a result, 'filled out' the narrative again to negate what he terms '*obscura dilucidans*' of his predecessor's work.<sup>823</sup> His additions do not consist of superfluous details that were intended merely to please, but rather extrapolate the significance of a virtue or deed which Orderic and Felix merely listed. Bolton even identifies that rather than Felix's lists or Orderic's paired down virtues, Peter usually supplies only one virtue so that he can follow through with its connotation, thereby transforming his work merely through commentary.<sup>824</sup> Peter's diction is consequently more verbose than Orderic's but it is focused. For example, Peter takes Felix's explanation of Guthlac's name and fully elucidates the '*bonum donum*' which he exhibits throughout his life, touching upon his parents, his enemies, his light to the world, his victory over the demons inhabiting Crowland, etc., foreshadowing these episodes to highlight the suitability of the name.<sup>825</sup> Peter's commentary emphasizes the aspects of Felix's *vita* that were admirable.

Another notable expansion that Bolton identified in his thesis was the concept of spiritual combat. In the section labelled '*De milicia Beati Guthlaci et de conversione eiusdem*', Peter has Guthlac explain to his former comrades-in-arms that he desires to become a *miles Christi* which is equated with monastic life, not just specifically an anchoritic one.<sup>826</sup> That Peter moved this concept forward in the narrative to make it equally applicable to Guthlac's time at Repton to make Guthlac's model more relevant to his monastic audience desirous of heroically perceiving their own path.<sup>827</sup> In addition, Peter's added commentary serves to educate his readers as to the explicit value of Guthlac's actions or virtues. The result is a work which is more explicit in its approach than Felix's *vita* as to why certain details are important to know. It appears as though Guthlac's legend had finally achieved the perfect balance between hagiographical convention and uncomplicated, gratifying reading. As such, Peter's text provided a more engaging, updated account of Crowland's founder for Abbot Henry and his community.

The reason that Peter de Blois' text has been labelled an epitome is due to the fact that although we know his source, Bolton has identified omissions. Bolton identifies that Peter omitted several minor details such as the hymn Guthlac sings after overcoming despair but he also notes that larger consecutive sections including Guthlac's spiritual armament, a 'panegyric on holy life

<sup>822</sup> Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, p. 107 and Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 44.

Peter's reply also survives attached to his work which then was used by John of Tynemouth in *PVG*, pp. 698-9.

<sup>823</sup> Peter writes: '*Veteris autem hystorie superflua sesecans, et obscura dilucidans, nequaquam a tenore veritatis excessi, nec novi aliquid nisi quod publice edificationis exigencia dictabat apposui.*' *PVG*, p. 699.

<sup>824</sup> Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," pp. 44-5.

<sup>825</sup> *PVG*, p. 700.

<sup>826</sup> Felix does not use the phrase *miles Christi* but *famulum Christi* at this point in the narrative, *VG*, XVIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 80-3. *PVG*, pp. 700-1; Bolton, "Thesis," p. 44.

<sup>827</sup> Two notable studies which discuss the heroic conceptualization of monastic life are J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, trans. C. Misrahi (New York: 1961); Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays*.

and divine love', the names of witnesses and the construction of his habitation are left out.<sup>828</sup> It is rather curious that Peter omitted the descriptions of Guthlac fortifying himself with spiritual armour since it has been noted that he added commentary on spiritual combat.<sup>829</sup> However, Peter added his own commentary to shape the Guthlac narrative and likely felt that some of Felix's digressions were not narrative bones which he needed to keep. Yet the most unusual omissions were from Felix's episode describing Guthlac's death. Bolton identified that reference to Guthlac informing Becel of his impending death, Becel's grief, Guthlac's last celebration of the mass, the discovery of the saint helpless in his oratory on the seventh day, his final wishes and questions regarding Guthlac's heavenly visitor are all absent.<sup>830</sup> Surely, these omissions would not have impeded the value or suitability of these episodes for their monastic audience or patron. If anything, their removal negates some of the narrative force from episodes which significantly relate to his profession, the holy manner of his death and the spiritual friendship so famously developed by other authors. Peter's death scene is instead a lighter discourse between a calmer Becel and a stoic Guthlac. These omissions define a model less dependent upon hagiographical conventions and allusions in order to isolate what Peter perceived as 'Guthlacian'.

Despite the significance of Peter's commentary, it is usually stated that he made no new contributions to the Guthlac narrative as set out in Felix. Bolton concurred with this observation in a later article though his thesis originally identified three sections which he considered new since they are not found in his source.<sup>831</sup> These three additions are an otherwise insignificant calendar of Guthlac's life, a listing of Æthelbald's gifts and an episode relating the popularity of Guthlac's shrine as a place of healing. Bolton was correct in identifying that Peter did not get his information regarding Æthelbald's gift and Guthlac's posthumous popularity from Felix as these episodes bear more than passing resemblance to the paragraph attached by Orderic Vitalis' to the end of his *Abbrevatio* and to the anonymous *Miracula* and *Translatio* that also survive only in the Douai MS 852. In fact, only Peter's text contains a full copy of the *Miracula* since the Douai manuscript's copy is missing the final folio.<sup>832</sup> By using these sections, moreover, it can be suggested that Abbot Henry may have provided Peter with the Douai compilation or one identical to it. No other copies of the *Miracula* or *Translatio* or their content have survived, not even in the *Historia Croilandensis*.

Peter de Blois' integration of this material implies that Crowland's claims to an ancient foundation were still invaluable to its perceived and projected history during Henry's abbacy but that Henry perceived that this should not eclipse the narrative. Indeed, the *Historia* relates that even though the abbey was enjoying a relative up-turn in its fortunes, it was still seemingly

<sup>828</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," p. 27 and appendix I, pp. 247-8.

<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26 and appendix I, p. 247.

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27 and appendix I, pp. 251-2.

<sup>831</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-7; Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 45. These 3 sections can be found in *PVG*, pp. 716, 718-25.

<sup>832</sup> The extended version is indicated by *PVG*, pp. 725-7, marked on p. 725, n.2. It is printed from the Trinity College Dublin MS B.2.7. There are five miracles which are missing from the Douai MS.

engaged in never-ending disputes with its neighbours. The inclusion of further miraculous evidence was likewise required; Henry of Avranches had probably very recently invested substantial energy and resources into translating Guthlac's remains and needed to supply continued proof of Guthlac's involvement for this investment to provide any return. Copying the *Miracula* and *Translatio* into the Douai MS 852 supports Henry de Longchamp's designs because it provided the most recent written testimony. No other 'recent' accounts of Guthlac's continued involvement survived though I would like to suggest that maybe they never existed in the first place. That Henry de Longchamp translated Guthlac's remains and commissioned a new, beautifully written and up-to-date epitome of his sustained association with Crowland at the start of his abbacy testifies to his designs to elevate this saint to the forefront once again. Similar efforts were not put into Crowland's other relics until much later on. Peter de Blois' epitome represents an important contribution to the development of the Guthlac legend because it amalgamates all of these outdated earlier materials into one new, skilfully written, and famously authored account that enabled Henry de Longchamp to have everything he wanted to promote St Guthlac and Crowland.

Peter de Blois' epitome may have met all of Henry de Longchamp's requisites at the time that it was written yet before twenty years had passed, this enthusiastic abbot desired a new commission. Henry de Avranches was invited to Crowland sometime between 1220-1233 to versify Peter's epitome into a 1666 line metrical *vita* in Latin hexameters.<sup>833</sup> This work is also significant in that it was one of the longest texts attributed to Henry of Avranches. J.C. Russell's research establishing the dossier for this author confirmed through stylistic similarity and classical allusions that this was one of Henry of Avranches compositions, notably one which supports his observation that Henry's 'forte was pleasure rather than proficiency' when considering its length.<sup>834</sup> Bolton concurred that this work was 'unusually long for the period and subject matter' but that it was an 'outstanding example of a medieval poetic adaptation'.<sup>835</sup> Further analysis of this poem will indicate some possible reasoning as to why this work is so long before identifying some possibilities as to why Abbot Henry might have commissioned another *vita* of St Guthlac so soon after the last one.

Bolton's thesis is again useful here because it contains the only full edition of Henry of Avranches' *vita* and thus provides concise discussions about its content and style in the textual introduction. In particular, he has helpfully summarized four stylistic traits which he argues Henry de Avranches employed in order to 'enliven' his lengthy narrative. The first point to note is that in

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<sup>833</sup> The scribe of the sole surviving MS of Henry's epitome has miscounted the lines so that he gives the final count as 1666. Cox has interpreted this numbering to reference to Revelations and the Number of the Beast however, Colgrave and Bolton disagree because the number here is not that number but *one thousand*, six hundred and sixty-six. Instead, this miscalculation has led Bolton to question to more relevantly consider whether this copy of the poem might be missing a section; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 14-7, 26-8 for a discussion of the style and metre of this poem, which rhymes only in ll. 53-6.

<sup>834</sup> Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, p. 21.

<sup>835</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," p. 15; Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 47.

form and language, Henry de Avranches drew from Peter de Blois' epitome of the saint which in turn drew upon Felix's *vita* and Orderic Vitalis' epitome; phrases from all three are to be identified in the verse *vita*.<sup>836</sup> However, there is still a distinction between source and product because Henry de Avranches did not simply versify these earlier sources but amalgamated and developed them for his own purposes. The most recognizable stylistic trait which Henry employed in this work, and his others, was a fondness for classical language and allusions.<sup>837</sup> In fact, his references to Alexander, Caesar and Hercules in the opening lines of the poem are noted to be an identifiable signature in many of his works. Probably the next most recognizable trait that Bolton identified is the range of Old and New Testament references throughout the poem; like the reference to Solomon in the episode relating Bartholomew's consolation of Guthlac.<sup>838</sup> However, Bolton noted that use of the Psalms originated in Felix's account. Both of these features incline towards a readership that was capable of understanding and appreciating their sophistication. These allusions as well as this intricate Latin versification were not for those Crowland monks whom Henry de Longchamp complained were 'better suited to weak understandings' of the pre-1191 epitomes.<sup>839</sup>

The final two stylistic traits identified by Bolton are aspects which transform the legend significantly under Henry de Avranches' treatment of it; they are his glosses on narrative material and his rhetorical inventions. This poet had his own thoughts upon what the meaning of certain episodes was and like Peter, put his own stamp upon their meaning. Thus under his treatment, Guthlac's conversion expands into a digression upon the temporal rewards of Mars while later mention of Guthlac donning spiritual armour to battle demons turns towards the hostile armies themselves.<sup>840</sup> At times, Henry of Avranches' purposes are better served through rhetorical passages exemplified by Guthlac's tirade at Satan, an exposition on ambition or a deathbed speech by the saint.<sup>841</sup> The invention of new complementary material into narrative episodes strongly suggests that the audience was to explicitly consider the lesson emphasized by one of Henry de Avranches' stylistic traits and follow Guthlac's model. Moreover, as an elegantly versified *vita* with an increased number of classical allusions, biblical references, rhetorical debates and commentary it must be assumed that that this work was intended for a discerning and highly literate monastic audience. That Henry de Longchamp first desired a more beautifully written *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* by Peter de Blois then a metrical *vita* by Henry de Avranches points towards this abbot being both the impetus and critic to please.

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<sup>836</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," p. 29.

<sup>837</sup> Bolton provides by way of an example *cruoris*, *MVG*, l.90; *hemina*, *MVG*, l.141; *sortem*, *MVG*, l.151; *Ibid*, p. 17. The classical allusions to Alexander, Caesar and Hercules occur in *MVG*, ll. 6-7, p. 38. Also Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, p. 20-1.

<sup>838</sup> *MVG*, l.313; Bolton, "Thesis," p. 51.

<sup>839</sup> These are the words attributed to Henry de Longchamp in his explanation as what the problem is with Orderic's epitome and why he desires a new version to be made of Felix's *vita*. From Henry's letter to Peter de Blois as contained in Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, pp. 224.

<sup>840</sup> *MVG*, ll. 89-95, 110-21; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 16, 42-3.

<sup>841</sup> *MVG*, ll. 874-911, 621, 1329-44; *Ibid*, pp. 16, 74-6, 64, 93. Also Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," pp. 49-50.

What these traits inform us about Henry de Avranches' purpose was that he wanted his audience to digress over commentary or discourse passages rather than simply recycling a linear narrative. In this, his intentions were not unlike Peter's. Bolton expressed it best when he explained that the metrical *vita* by Henry de Avranches moves 'from narrative interest towards ethical... to reinforce the spiritual biography he was writing.'<sup>842</sup> In fact, there are even some indications that Henry emphasized the correct ethical stance through emphasizing the horrors of 'corrupt nature', demons and invisible hordes but also through creating new conversations between the saint and St Bartholomew, or Becel, or the demons, or Satan, for didactic effect.<sup>843</sup> A similar approach, though Henry could not have been aware of it, was employed less effectively by the anonymous author of *Guthlac A*. By omitting the demons' impotency, they become more frightening adversaries and simultaneously make Guthlac's accomplishments 'more meaningful' to his audience, according to Bolton. Such an invigorating portrayal of Guthlac's virtues must surely have matched Abbot Henry de Longchamp's enthusiastic designs for reviving St Guthlac's image. It certainly surpassed Peter de Blois' meagre commentary.

All of the stylistic traits identified by Bolton contribute to our appreciation of Henry of Avranches' *vita* yet there were narrative inclusions and omissions made too which are significant because they inform us about what aspects had lost favour or needed bolstering in the years following Guthlac's translation and Peter's epitome. By Bolton's reckoning, Henry still omits the same seven episodes which Peter does and another two; the episode in which Wilfrid witnesses the sparrows coming to Guthlac and Becel and Pega's internment of Guthlac in his oratory though he notes that some similar aspects of these episodes remain.<sup>844</sup> He also recycled fourteen episodes from Felix's *vita* that had not been used by Peter and introduced another fifteen new ones. The episodes that Henry derived from Felix are Guthlac's birth, that news of his birth spread, Guthlac's decision to seek the desert, the description of Crowland, his spiritual armour, the construction of his dwelling, how Wilfrid's charter was stolen by a raven but recovered with Guthlac's help, how his final illness begins, how Becel is told of Guthlac's approaching death, Guthlac's final celebration of the mass, his internment in a rich monument provided by King Æthelbald and the posthumous miracle in which a blind peasant is healed when Pega administers her brother's relic to him.<sup>845</sup> These constitute over half of the episodes left out of Peter's epitome and may suggest something about Henry de Avranches' intentions.

To begin with, these restored episodes revive the original narrative progression as set out by Felix in which signs at Guthlac's birth presage the portents that accompany his saintly death. The death scene itself is recovered in its entirety to once again include Guthlac's prophetic knowledge of his death and Becel's important role as both witness and recipient of Guthlac's

<sup>842</sup> Bolton, "Latin Revisions of VG," p. 49.

<sup>843</sup> While mentioning the narrative value of Henry's demons, Bolton did not draw comparisons to their didactic value as it could be related to the conversational passages in this *vita*; *Ibid*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>844</sup> Bolton, "Thesis," p. 27.

<sup>845</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

spiritual friendship. These elements establish that Guthlac was God's chosen from birth not a later choice. Becel's role may have contributed something else. Becel figured prominently in Felix's account and in the *Historia Croilandensis* so that perhaps the fact that his role had been demoted to only the episode in which he was tempted to kill Guthlac did not sit well with a community so familiar with his original role. Nor would the portrayal of spiritual friendship have been undesirable to a monastic audience that was claiming the continued involvement of this saint. So too would Crowland's landscape and Guthlac's choices about his situation there have been relevant to those who had likewise pledged to live at Crowland. It may also have been at the request of Abbot Henry and his community that Æthelbald's and Pega's instrumental role in setting up the cult was revived for the sake of continuity. Henry de Avranches' references to Æthelbald's provisions and the continued popularity of Guthlac's shrine were encouraged by including Felix's descriptions of earlier gifts and miracles. So too might references to Pega have reinforced Crowland's claims to her nearby church and its revenues. Most especially, Henry de Avranches' additions strongly suggest that Crowland under Henry de Longchamp sought to develop, invent, and integrate stories which relate to secondary relics associated with the saint.

The secondary relics themselves were not mentioned in any materials produced prior to this metrical composition, excepting the *Historia Croilandensis* reference that mentions that Pega gave her brother's scourge and Psalter to the abbot of Crowland before making her pilgrimage to Rome.<sup>846</sup> In this text however, a flail is explained to have been given to Guthlac by St Bartholomew to battle the demons with.<sup>847</sup> In addition, the episode in which Wilfrid's parchment is stolen by a raven and found unharmed through Guthlac's directions becomes under Henry of Avranches' direction a new account of Guthlac's stolen Psalter being recovered from underwater, unharmed after seven years. He is then able to relate that it can still be seen '*Seruat in argento preciosis Croilandia gemmis. /Et patet omnis adhuc ibi littera; rara litura.*'<sup>848</sup> Both of these items figure prominently in ten of the eighteen roundels of the Harley Roll, implying that Henry de Longchamp was promoting them as well and thus would appreciate an account of their use by Guthlac. Yet the longest and most original contribution made to the narrative as found in this metrical *vita* relates to Pega herself. Henry de Avranches records a unique tale in which a demon appeared to Guthlac in the disguise of his sister, encouraging him to break his fast. Guthlac refuses and discovers the ruse, leading the siblings to mutually agree to abstain from each other's company for the preservation of their souls.<sup>849</sup> This episode is worthwhile for a number of reasons, the most indispensable being that no other dossier material ever reconciled Pega's importance in setting up the cult with the fact that she is never referred to in relation to Guthlac's upbringing or dissociation from his family and former life. This is even more anomalous if we are

<sup>846</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 9.

<sup>847</sup> *MVG*, II. 525-36a; Bolton, "Thesis," p. 60.

<sup>848</sup> *MVG*, II. 440-59; *Ibid*, pp. 32, 56-7.

<sup>849</sup> *MVG*, II. 680-95, 698-726; *Ibid*, pp. 31, 66-8.

to believe that Pega too was a *sancto virgo Christi*; an oversight that was probably first noted by Felix who had dying Guthlac charge Becel to '*dicas illi, quia ideo aspectum ipsius in hoc saeculo vitavi, ut in aeternum coram Patre nostro in gaudio sempiterno ad invicem videamur*.'<sup>850</sup> Henry de Avranches episode resolves these issues by describing Pega as '*virgo;/ Regia, pulchra; tamen humilis que subdita Christo*;' before writing a moving dialogue in which Guthlac comes to terms with his decision to live as a solitary without familial contact because '*nec sit domus una duobus*.'<sup>851</sup>

Additions such as these to the Guthlac narrative strongly suggest that Henry de Avranches sought to reconcile a number of earlier anomalies but also develop new material which would be important to Crowland's post-1200 designs for the cult of their patron saint. They also help to explain why the versified *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* survives as one of the longest compositions of Henry de Avranches. That master poet Henry was faced with a convoluted list of demands by Abbot Henry de Longchamp was certainly likely, given the replacement of Peter de Blois' epitome so soon after it was commissioned and the integration of fifteen new episodes into the narrative. The elaborate metre, corrections to the narrative and elegant phraseology must have pleased the demanding patron who had once written to Peter that '*...poets...renowned for their eloquence... have, in grandiloquent style, most becomingly discoursed upon the histories, the lives, the actions, and the battles of illustrious men and heroes of great celebrity*.'<sup>852</sup> Peter should have been flattered to read this comparison but his epitome could not live up to it for long because changes to the cult made during the abbacy of Henry de Longchamp. Henry de Avranches' metrical *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* did.

It is clear in reviewing the Latin texts that were created after Crowland came under Norman rule that they were produced to meet the specific requirements of the abbot who commissioned them. These texts are extremely useful in this regard. More is known about their authorship, their dedications and their timeline than any of the previous materials which help to identify through comparison why successive texts might have been produced. Each abbot had different concerns or priorities to be met and these are reflected in the alterations to the narrative itself though it is clear that the competing concerns of Crowland's foundation and even its other relics at times overshadowed or subverted the promotion of St Guthlac in the materials grouped here as Norman developments. Abbot Henry de Longchamp can undeniably be considered the reason why Guthlac's cult did not slide into obscurity by the early thirteenth century. Russell calls him 'the source and inspiration' since so many materials were produced during his abbacy as opposed to any earlier period at Crowland.<sup>853</sup> The materials that have survived from his time;

<sup>850</sup> 'tell her that I have in this life avoided her presence so that in eternity we may see one another in the presence of our Father amid eternal joys.' VG, L; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 154-5.

<sup>851</sup> *MVG*, II. 680b- 681, 721b; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 66, 68.

<sup>852</sup> Trans. by Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 224. This letter was also commented upon by Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, p. 108, who argued that these words of Abbot Henry de Longchamp should be conceived of as a tribute not just to Peter to whom they were intended but Henry as well.

<sup>853</sup> Russell and Heironimus, *Henry of Avranches' English Poems*, p. 105.



Crowland's architecture and statuary, the Harley Roll, the Douai MS 852, Peter de Blois' epitome and Henry de Avranches metrical *vita*, represent the pinnacle of this cult's achievements. Furthermore, they reflect the monastic context that produced and commissioned them more completely than any previous text.

All of the Guthlac materials to some extent reflect the monastic context in which they were undeniably created, copied and preserved. Whether it was through the sources that were alluded to, the difficult Latin or treatment which indicated a specific concern, the purpose and changing function of each work relays to us its author's intentions for their chosen audience. Felix defined this cult's origins through a Latin *vita* that mimicked Aldhelmian style and adhered to conventions linguistically, structurally and contextually pertinent to his hermit-saint subject. Even though Felix's patron was a king, and one whose literacy is unknown, source studies do not dispute that this genre was historically intended for and created by monks, though no monastery existed at Crowland at this time. Similar unknowns daunt our perceptions of the vernacular variations, though again source analyses have put forth that these materials contain similarly interwoven allusions and interpretations particular to each authorial purpose and unique to our understanding of Old English saints' *vitae*. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to consider that these vernacular texts were created to increase the accessibility of the Guthlac legend for a less literate audience possibly including some laity. No more suggestive an example can be put forth than the Vespasian MS close rendering of Felix's text into Old English. The later Latin revisions and epitomes of the saint have all recognized the primacy of Felix's creation, even as they sought to revise it. These final contributions go beyond updating the language to adapt the legend through new commentary and most importantly, the integration of new episodes treating Crowland's relics and foundation legend.

All of the Guthlacian materials explored at length in this chapter indicate that there were elements to these texts that were best understood and appreciated by a literate audience, which in this cult's early days, must have been exclusively monastic. There were nevertheless, other atypical elements in the materials created during the Origins and Vernacular Variations phase of Guthlac's cult which will be explored in chapters 5 and 6. The authors who were creating new Latin compositions for the abbots of Crowland in the years following the Norman Conquest were less and less concerned with creating epitomes or new compositions which could be easily comprehended by those with sparse Latin abilities or source knowledge, than they were with reclaiming Guthlac as a model for the community and meeting the changing needs of successive abbots at Crowland and their progressive designs for the cult.

## Chapter V

### THE SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE HEROIC MATERIAL IN THE GUTHLAC NARRATIVE

Even though the monastic context of the Guthlac dossier unarguably managed the perpetuation of this cult through to the Dissolution, the narrative first defined by Felix contains many unconventional aspects which must have served some purpose in the early days of the cult. The most notably prominent anomalous feature being the amount of secularized heroic material embedded in the Guthlac narrative. This factor becomes even more interesting when we are reminded that amongst the other surviving Anglo-Saxon hagiographical texts, Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* is the only one which cannot be definitively attributed to the religious community which houses the saint's bones.<sup>854</sup> In addition, Felix's *vita* was also the first Anglo-Saxon hagiography whose dedication was not to an abbot or bishop, but to a king. Such factors seem to suggest that the impetus for this cult was not the same as its contemporaries and that Felix actually may have composed his *vita* for a wider audience that included the courts of East Anglia and maybe even Mercia.

The theory that Felix's *vita* 'perhaps had a royal rather than monastic patron' does in fact coincide with studies of texts' contemporary audiences during this period that acknowledge the influence of kings in the nature of the texts being produced.<sup>855</sup> Subsequently it would be worthwhile here to consider how the interests of these patrons and a lay audience, might affect the ways that this legend was shaped initially and through revisions over time, after we can be certain of Crowland's management. Ultimately, this chapter will consider how the heroic aspects of Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* might inform us about early interest in St Guthlac. It will not consider the vernacular materials in depth because heroic themes and language are common amongst the surviving corpus of Old English poems, making any consideration of their relevance through comparison impracticable and inconclusive. However, juxtaposition of how this material was treated in the Norman developments and Longchamp revival stages will reveal the effect Crowland had upon the legend.

This approach was influenced to a considerable extent by Patrick Wormald's article written to commemorate the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bede's birth.<sup>856</sup> In that article, he proposed that the ongoing debate surrounding whether or not *Beowulf* was a Christian poem did not reasonably consider its pagan elements as evidence of the adaptation of Christianity to the

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<sup>854</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>855</sup> Quote from Thacker, "Thesis," p. 279. Also Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 15-6; Whitelock, *Audience*, p. 29; Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 86; H. Munro Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge: 1912), p. 463; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 84 and Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, p. 78.

<sup>856</sup> Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy."

'tastes and interests' of a newly-converted Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. In order to explore whether Felix's *Vita Guthlaci* might similarly reflect these 'tastes and interests', the heroic material will be presented with the aim of identifying both its early social relevance and its later eclipse under monastic management. Furthermore, if the heroic material in the early dossier materials was intended for a wider audience including those of questionable literacy, then this chapter must also question how these works could have been accessed and what their function might have been. Taking this perspective into consideration will contribute to our understanding how the popular appeal of St Guthlac affected this cult's impetus, development and longevity.

### **The Origins**

The possibility that the Guthlac narrative was composed with a lay audience in mind presents itself initially, but not exclusively, in the prologue to Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* with its dedication to King Ælfwald of East Anglia.<sup>857</sup> Moreover, for this dedication to be considered in light of the observations made in the previous chapter, we should hope to find aspects within the narrative which could be considered appealing to a lay audience. The Guthlac narrative does not disappoint in that respect for the many prominent references to Mercian kings, the healing of *thegns* from both kingdoms, and even a notable reference to a free peasant accessing the saint's relics, may all be indicative of lay interest in the cult early on.<sup>858</sup> In fact, over half the miracle stories in the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* relate laymen benefitting from or being witness to Guthlac's powers and the narrative itself contains many unusual aspects.<sup>859</sup> This section will reconsider the social relevance of heroic material in Felix's *vita* before relating it to the geographical context suggested by its dedication.

Following the prologue with its dedication, Felix fills nineteen of his fifty-three chapters with details concerning Guthlac's lineage and upbringing. This is a substantial allotment, in detail not seen in the other Anglo-Saxon hagiographies. Felix records how Guthlac was born in the time of Æthelred of Mercia and was genealogically descended, through his father Penwalh, to the Mercian royal line begun by Icel though his family lived in the district of the Middle Angles.<sup>860</sup> The explanation of Guthlac's name may also be significant, for Felix writes that in Latin it meant *belli munus* and was derived from the otherwise unknown tribe of the *Guthlacingas* whose development would come to match his own. While we cannot speculate in what way the name was fitting to this tribe, Bolton has interpreted Guthlac's name from its etymology to represent his transformation from soldier to *miles Christi*, by interpreting the meaning of *munus/lac* to symbolize

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<sup>857</sup> VG, Prologue.

<sup>858</sup> Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 102. Also HE, III.30, IV. 13, V.18 which relate people carrying off the earth from the sites where King Oswald and Bishop Hæddi had died to protect their crops and livestock. These accounts do not relate the administration of relics by the church housing them, like that described in VG, LIII.

<sup>859</sup> VG, XL, XLI, XLII, XLV, XLIX, LII, LIII.

<sup>860</sup> VG, I-II.

curative miracles, death as a sacrifice, or the promise of a gift or reward.<sup>861</sup> Bolton's study identifies another key point regarding the name; it is 'not in any way bound to those of its bearer's family'.<sup>862</sup> From the very beginning Guthlac is portrayed as set apart, not just from his family but from his kin, though this fits as much with heroic convention as hagiographical.

The narrative becomes more intriguing as Guthlac matures, for while these early chapters relate portentous signs of his future calling both at his birth and in his childish behaviour, they also contain incongruous descriptions of his noble upbringing in his father's hall, details of his family life and how, when he grew strong enough, the remembered glory of heroic legends influenced him to take up arms and amass a band of followers.<sup>863</sup> Nor is Felix in any way apologetic or dismissive of Guthlac's militaristic skill for he writes: '*Et cum adversantium sibi urbes et villas, vicos et castella igne ferroque vastaret, contrasis undique diversarum gentium sociis, immensas praedas gregasset, tunc velut ex divino consilio edoctus tertiam partem adgregatae gazae possidentibus remittebat.*'<sup>864</sup> In fact, Felix explains that Guthlac's band only decided to keep the peace after nine years of *praedas, caedes rapinasque* because they were 'worn out'.<sup>865</sup> Such details stand out inharmoniously against the conventions of this genre and although Rollason explains that 'warlike deeds and heroic ancestry were not a bar to sainthood', the anonymous monk who wrote the first *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* thought it best to '*silentio pretereo, ne fastidium lectori ingererem*' Cuthbert's own military career in favour of his religious service.<sup>866</sup> Bede's revised *vita*, which Felix emulated, drew even less attention to it, suggesting that Guthlac's military prowess and upbringing must have served some purpose.<sup>867</sup>

Several possibilities present themselves. At its most basic level, the detailed accounts of Guthlac's former life emphasize the extent of his sacrifice by accenting the successful career which he gave up to become a monk. However, it is also possible that this material was glorified in the *Vita Guthlaci* because it set up Guthlac as a hero recognizable according to the conventions of secular society. Such a portrayal would have enhanced his credibility amongst those who still upheld these values and reflect what Wormald referred to as 'the social origins not only of Guthlac himself, but also of the communities for whom his deeds were recorded'.<sup>868</sup> This material may have had a more explicit function in admonishing its lay audience to consider similar deeds in light of their own impending deaths and repent. Certainly, Guthlac's night-time imaginings of his own death and the deaths of former Mercian kings implies that this material

<sup>861</sup> VG, X. Bolton, "The Background and Meaning of the Vita Sancti Guthlac," pp.601-3.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid, p. 596.

<sup>863</sup> VG, XI-XVI.

<sup>864</sup> 'But when he had devastated the towns and residences of his foes, their villages and fortresses with fire and sword and, gathering together companions from various races and from all directions, had amassed immense booty, then as if instructed by divine counsel, he would return to the owners a third part of the treasure collected.' VG, XVII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>865</sup> VG, XVIII; Ibid, pp. 80-1.

<sup>866</sup> AVC, I.7; Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives*, pp. 72-3. Also Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 90.

<sup>867</sup> He merely records that Cuthbert gave his horse and spear to a servant before entering the church at Melrose; *VCP*, VI.

<sup>868</sup> Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy," p. 56. Also Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays*.

might have functioned like, or exploited the popularity of, vision accounts.<sup>869</sup> Considerations like these strongly suggest that this material was relevant in both hagiographical and social contexts, substantiating his appeal.

Furthermore, Guthlac's special appeal for the laity may even continue once he begins his isolation. Felix relates that many people of various ranks travelled to see the saint. Colgrave identified that Felix borrowed this phrase from Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti* yet Felix significantly expanded it to explicitly list all the classes, lay and ecclesiastical, who revered the holy man; '*abbates, fratres, comites, divites, vexati, pauperes*'.<sup>870</sup> Indeed, the miracle stories related after he has achieved spiritual majority reflect this deliberate listing and the relationship between East Anglia and Mercia at the time that Felix was writing. Favourable references within the *vita* to Mercian royalty extend beyond the first few chapters; the monastery that Guthlac enters was Repton, a Mercian royal foundation, and it is Bishop Hædda from Lichfield who comes to ordain Guthlac and consecrate his oratory.<sup>871</sup> Æthelbald's *gesith* Ecga and his retainer Ofa are both healed at Crowland.<sup>872</sup> Even Abbot Wilfrid, oft-named as a witness, comes to Crowland in the company of Æthelbald on one occasion, though no indication of what their relationship was can be determined from this.<sup>873</sup> Moreover, Æthelbald is recorded to have visited the saint for solace twice before the saint's death and once after.<sup>874</sup> Felix also records that it is Æthelbald who built *miris ornamentorum structuris* around the incorrupt saint a year after his death, in gratitude for the intercession which gained him the Mercian throne.<sup>875</sup> The *Vita Guthlaci* prominently relates Guthlac's role as a prophet, intercessor and healer to those from the neighbouring kingdom of Mercia, most especially through the accounts of his spiritual friendship with Æthelbald.

The references to East Anglia possibly appear less prominent because Felix wrote his *vita* for Ælfwald and therefore did not need to record known affiliations or remind this king of Guthlac's efficacy. Nevertheless, there remain some references to different East Anglian classes visiting the saint. There is the miracle of the possessed boy Hwaetred, son of an East Anglian nobleman, being cured at Crowland.<sup>876</sup> A certain unnamed abbot frequently visited and was able to do so within a day while in another two tales, Guthlac displays foreknowledge about clerics from *quoddam monasterio*.<sup>877</sup> The final chapter records the healing of a free peasant from a tribal group that was presumably from nearby.<sup>878</sup> Then there are references to the Abbess Ecgburh, daughter of King Aldwulf, Ælfwald's predecessor, who appears to be a close friend of the saint. It is she who supplies his coffin and probes to learn of his successor, in imitation of episodes in the

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<sup>869</sup> VG, XVIII-XIX. See chapter 6.

<sup>870</sup> VG, XLV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 138-9.

<sup>871</sup> VG, XIX-XXIV, XXVI.

<sup>872</sup> VG, XLII, XLV.

<sup>873</sup> VG, XL.

<sup>874</sup> VG, XL, XLIX, LII.

<sup>875</sup> VG, LI. Also Damon, *Soldier Saints*, p. 81

<sup>876</sup> VG, XLI.

<sup>877</sup> VG, XXXVII, XLIII-IV.

<sup>878</sup> VG, LIII.

*Vita Cuthberti*.<sup>879</sup> We are not told how Guthlac knew Ecgburh, unlike the episodes it imitates, but she was likely the abbess of an East Anglian foundation for if she was at Repton with Guthlac, a 'more plausible context' for their acquaintance might have been supplied by Felix, who supplies them for every other visiting Mercian.<sup>880</sup> These few references to East Anglia suggest that Ælfwald was the impetus for a *vita* in which he would find a portrayal favourable to him; especially one that places his predecessor's daughter in an important role and reminds the Mercian king of his time spent in exile within East Anglia.

In fact, a precedent had already been set in East Anglia for royal patronage when King Sigeberht provided Fursa with lands and his successor Anna and the nobles of East Anglia 'furnished it with shelters and gifts'.<sup>881</sup> This is exactly what Æthelbald provided for Guthlac's shrine, presumably on lands granted by Ælfwald.<sup>882</sup> Fursa even left Ultanus as an anchorite at the site after he had left, in the same way that Guthlac foresees that Cissa, another hermit, will be his successor at Crowland.<sup>883</sup> Altogether, the references to both Mercian and East Anglian lay involvement in the *Vita Guthlaci* demonstrate that Felix sought to tell of the life of a saint for these peoples who could rival St Cuthbert in power and prestige. An interpretation of Guthlac's own spiritual transformation as educative for this audience cannot therefore be ruled out. In writing for a royal patron, Felix appears to have had the very difficult task of assimilating atypical aspects of Guthlac's legend into hagiographical conventions. The longevity of this cult and the continued copying of Felix's *vita* long after new epitomes had been written attest that he was not unsuccessful in his task.

### **Felix's use of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a heroic model**

Indeed, Felix's intention to create a subject that would adhere to both hagiographical conventions and the heroic ideals upheld by his dedicatee may have led him to seek out models that would work with the conventions of hagiographical writing. Colgrave's edition of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* identifies that Felix used a significant number of Virgilian phrases throughout this text that were borrowed from books 1, 2, 4, 5, 11 and 12 of the *Aeneid* as well as the *Georgics*, although his insights into these borrowings ends there.<sup>884</sup> According to hagiographical convention, the audience of a saints' *vita* was to consider allusions to other exemplars as evidencing this saint's continuation of that sanctity. It follows this line of reasoning that we should also consider how the context of Virgilian borrowings might have been relevant to an audience

<sup>879</sup> VG, XLVIII, L; VCP. XXIII-IV.

<sup>880</sup> VG, XLVIII. Also chapter 3.

<sup>881</sup> HE III.18-9; VF, 35; Kobos, "The Structure and Background of *Guthlac A*," p. 239.

<sup>882</sup> VF, 36; Ibid, p. 240.

<sup>883</sup> VF, 37; Ibid, p. 241.

<sup>884</sup> Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*. See his notes in margins of the Latin text. Also discussion of Aldhelm's use of Virgil in chapter 4.

familiar with these works, due to the fact that Aeneas may have provided a suitable heroic exemplar for Felix's portrayal of Guthlac.

Perhaps the episode which is most strikingly imitative of the context from which it was borrowed relates how while dreaming and asleep, Guthlac awoke to shouting and found his hermitage under attack from a British-speaking army and his buildings alight. This episode curiously references Guthlac's militaristic career by explaining that the saint knew British from time spent in exile amongst them, although Felix's use of phrases from the *Aeneid* point towards him making identifications to the trials and tribulations of Aeneas. Guthlac awakes *arrectis auribus adstans*, just as Aeneas does after dreaming that Hector has come to tell him that Troy is falling to the Greeks.<sup>885</sup> Both soldiers awake alert from dreaming and run outside to defend their homes against a foreign army and *domus flamma superante ardere*.<sup>886</sup> Aeneas' reaction to seeing Troy alight and in the hold of a foreign army is to exclaim 'how glorious it is to die in arms!' - A sentiment equally applicable to the *vita* of a *miles Christi*. In fact, the survival of a late ninth-century Carolingian *Song of the Watchmen of Modena* relates another, albeit later example of how this episode could be adapted to a Christian context of civic and spiritual defence against Christ's enemies.<sup>887</sup> It appears that this Carolingian song was sung in a chapel at the city walls 'perhaps accompanied by the sentinels before their duties', evidencing how this episode could be pertinently used within a liturgical setting. The orientation of this vision within Guthlac and Aeneas' respective narratives is even more significant in that it marks a turning point after which each 'hero' will realize their destiny.

Nor is this the only instance where Virgilian terminology is used to denote a turning point in Felix's Guthlac narrative. Chapter XIX begins a new phase in Guthlac's life, from which point Guthlac makes a covenant that if he awakes, he will dedicate himself to God. This chapter opens with imagery that complements Guthlac's conversion; 'So when the mists of the dark night had been dispersed and the sun had risen in fire over helpless mortals, while the winged tribe chirped their morning songs...' <sup>888</sup> And Felix liked the phrase *mortalibus aegris* so much that he applied it again, eight chapters later, to describe the sunrise that marked Guthlac's final arrival at Crowland and his break with the community at Repton.<sup>889</sup> Both of these junctures set Guthlac apart in his character, steadfastness, and faith from those whom *mortalibus aegris* implies. Aeneas is chosen by the Gods, and in a similar way, so was Guthlac.<sup>890</sup> They both awoke and set out on a new path because they were predestined to do so. Others slept through their fate while these two were marked out for greater purposes, and in a way, both can be seen as 'protectors' of their people. Guthlac dedicated his life to God and was able to prophesize, heal and give advice as a

<sup>885</sup> VG, XXXIV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 110; *Aeneid*, II.303; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, p. 93.

<sup>886</sup> VG, XXXIV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 110; *Aeneid*, II. 304-312; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, p. 93.

<sup>887</sup> Peter Godman, ed., *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London: 1985), no.60, pp. 324-7.

<sup>888</sup> 'Ergo exutis umbrosae noctis caliginibus, cum sol mortalibus egris igneum demoverat ortum et matutini volucres avino forcipes pipant...' VG, XVIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 82.

<sup>889</sup> VG, XXVI; *Ibid*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>890</sup> *Aeneid*, II. 289-97; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, p. 93.

result. Aeneas, similarly, was charged by Hector to look after the holy things and household gods of Troy until he was able to found a new city.<sup>891</sup> In other words, these men were both chosen to lead their people on the right path to salvation though that way was not straightforward; *invia lustra* signals the likeness of their circuitous paths.<sup>892</sup>

In fact, Virgilian phrases appear in a number of other chapters to describe the supernatural movements of demons, marking the significance of their arrivals and departures as failed attempts at terrorizing the saint.<sup>893</sup> Ciccarese's notable article considering Felix's sources did not draw attention to this point though she identified how Felix was influenced by Virgil's geography of the Underworld.<sup>894</sup> Even Felix's final chapter relating how a blind man was healed through contact with a relic of the saint may be enhanced by considering the context of its Virgilian borrowing. When sight is miraculously returned to the blind man, the chapter and the *vita*, conclude with the statement that the healed man gave 'fitting thanks to God, such as none could fail to give.'<sup>895</sup> This is an interesting borrowing, as it is a sentiment that could have originated in any number of Christian exemplars though it was here borrowed from the *Aeneid* where Aeneas explains to Dido that he and his people are not capable of giving fit thanks for being made welcome in Carthage. Aeneas' speech is of further note for the interest its context may be to Felix's *vita*:

'O you who have pitied Troy's unutterable woes, you who grant us- the remnant of the Greeks, now outworn by every mischance of land and sea, and destitute of all- a share in your city and home, to pay you fitting thanks, Dido, is not in our power, nor in theirs who anywhere survive of Trojan race, scattered over the wide world. May the gods, if any divine powers have regard for the good, if there is any justice anywhere- may the gods and the consciousness of right bring you worthy rewards! What happy ages bore you? What glorious parents gave birth to so noble a child?'<sup>896</sup> This speech calls to mind formulae from other saints' *lives*, particularly the passage from the *Vita Martini* embedded in Felix's chapter L.<sup>897</sup> Felix's *vita* was a testimony of the life and miracles of St Guthlac and his deeds, as well as his trials, can be interpreted as a version of the great Trojan prince Aeneas, who also led his people to a new earthly kingdom, where Guthlac's kingdom was the kingdom of heaven. Aeneas and his companions are unable to give fit thanks, like Guthlac's healed blind man, although in the later situation, it is thanks for the power that was granted by God through his servant Guthlac. The higher powers mentioned in

<sup>891</sup> 'Sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia Penatis'; *Aeneid*, II. 293; *Ibid*, p. 93.

<sup>892</sup> VG, XXV; *Aeneid*, IV.151; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p.88.

<sup>893</sup> VG, XXX (*fumus a facie, vacuas auras; late loca questibus inple-*) from *Aeneid*, XII.592; *Georgics* IV.515; VG, XXXIII (*alarum remigio; caelo demoverat umbras*) from *Aeneid*, I.301, XI, 210; VG, XXXVI (*vacuas in auras recessit*) from *Aeneid*, IV.705, XII, 592; VG, XLI (*iter rad-; iubare exorto; imo pectore trahens*) from *Aeneid*, V.217, IV.130, I.371; VG, L (*imo pectore tra-*) from *Aeneid*, I.371; *Ibid*, pp.100, 108, 114, 116, 130, 156. Wright notes that Virgil's descriptions of 'storms at sea, the violent power of nature and the monstrous' were also prevalent in Breton hagiography; *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Hampshire: 1995), p. 175.

<sup>894</sup> Ciccarese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice."

<sup>895</sup> 'grates Deo persolvens dignas, quas nullus reddere nescit'; VG, LIII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 170.

<sup>896</sup> *Aeneid*, I.595-610; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>897</sup> VG, LI; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 162.



Aeneas' speech and the promise of a true reward can easily be interpreted within a Christian context, as can the extent of Guthlac's sacrifice exemplify his sanctity. What more fitting an ending could Felix utilize than reference to a vow, from the lips of Aeneas, but applicable to another audience, than 'ever shall your honour, your name, and your praises abide, whatever be the lands that summon me'?<sup>898</sup>

It is possible that Felix chose the *Aeneid* as a model for the similarities that he perceived between the two heroes. Some of the borrowings allow direct parallels to be made between Aeneas and Guthlac, displaying them as heroes bringing their people to a new kingdom. Like Aeneas, Guthlac is chosen by God to follow an unmarked path, separated from helpless mortals as the sunrise separates a new day from night. The terminology appears to have been deliberately and continuously applied; hell and heaven are described in Virgilian language, as are many of the sights and sounds accompanying demonic visions in the *vita*. Although there are only ever short phrases borrowed, their fuller context may have been explained or known to its audience, as was the purpose of later medieval *Florilegia*.<sup>899</sup> It is also possible that Felix was being intentionally coy in his allusions to Virgil, like his exemplar Aldhelm, whom Orchard has remarked 'manipulated borrowed diction where others merely borrow'.<sup>900</sup> However, I believe that Felix intended to do more than include Virgilian fragments to enhance his language. If we consider only the instances where language is borrowed directly from the *Aeneid*, then it can be shown that Felix used an almost complete version of the epic, if not an extended codex of *Virgiliana*, because Colgrave has identified borrowings from Books 1, 2, 4, 5, 11 and 12 of the *Aeneid* as well as the *Georgics*. This linguistic evidence supports Felix's conscious allusion to a Virgilian context, as we can tell solely from the borrowings that he would have had access to, and therefore an awareness of, the development and outcome of the *Aeneid*.

The use of phrases from and allusions to the *Aeneid* strongly support that Felix used a Virgilian context for not only the heroic character of Guthlac himself but also for the nature of Aeneas' leadership, the character of the Underworld and its inhabitants. Use of this text indicates how heroic archetypes could be adapted to a Christian context, indeed, how familiarity with this text enabled Felix to follow hagiographical convention in explaining heroic deeds as a continuation of another's. In fact, the *Historia Croilandensis* relates that King Wiglaf, circa 833 A.D., gave his purple coronation robes 'upon which is worked the destruction of Troy' to Crowland as a wall ornament, suggesting that Aeneas may have continued to inspire Crowland's perception of their patron saint long after Felix's textual contribution.<sup>901</sup> Visual representations of the *Aeneid* were not unfamiliar, and the bottom petal of Crowland's quatrefoil incorporates a sow nursing piglets into the scene showing Guthlac's arrival at Crowland with Tatwine and an attendant to call

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<sup>898</sup> 'Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt,/ Quae me cumque vocant terrae'; *Aeneid*, I. 608-610.

<sup>899</sup> See Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England. Figuring the Aeneid from the 12th Century to Chaucer*, p. 36. Also Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, p. 74-5.

<sup>900</sup> A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1994), pp. 224.

<sup>901</sup> Riley, ed., *Pseudo-Ingulph HC*, p. 19.

to mind the prophesy that Aeneas would found his shining city where he saw this sign.<sup>902</sup> Felix considered his audience and especially the interests of his patron, when imagining the Guthlac narrative. His use of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a source and model demonstrates this.

### **The shared context of the *Beowulf* poem**

When Felix records that Guthlac was influenced by hearing heroic tales to take up arms, we should consider that these tales might have consisted of Germanic legends as much as classical accounts, like the fall of Troy.<sup>903</sup> Nor would any discussion of the audience and function of the *Vita Guthlaci* be complete without acknowledging that its heroic material might reflect the environment and thought-world which was described in the poem *Beowulf*. The initial, and most evident, demarcations between these two texts; one being heroically conceived in Old English while the other typifies the Latin hagiographical genre, belay the similarities which have long been recognized since noted by Dorothy Whitelock in her consideration of *The Audience of Beowulf*.<sup>904</sup> Closer examination of the two texts and their possible shared provenance will show how they may reflect the attitudes of the same social background; a consideration which may further support consideration that the *Vita Guthlaci* was a work produced for the East Anglian king.

Nonetheless, there remains much debate as to the dating of *Beowulf* which makes considerations of shared context problematic. The *Beowulf* poem survives only in an eleventh-century manuscript copy though many scholars lean towards an earlier compositional date for earlier forms of the poem and of course, the oral legend from which all versions ultimately derived. Many studies have 'addressed but not settled' this question of dating and the uncertainty which dominates post-1980s studies of *Beowulf* has been picked up on by Liuzza, Frank, Bjork and Obermeier in their attempts to update the trends and approaches to this text.<sup>905</sup> It is worthwhile to note that two methods appear to be gaining favour for their attempts to clarify a range; internal analyses of language, style and metre and external analyses of historical contexts and attitudes in the poem.

The former type of analysis has revealed that the dialect of *Beowulf* is predominately late West Saxon, containing elements of Northumbrian and Mercian and some Kentish influence. Identified morphological features used in the poem have aided this assessment, isolating *Beowulf* from other surviving poetical works and leading to the suggestion that it was originally of Anglian

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<sup>902</sup> *Aeneid*, VIII, 81-101; Hextall, *Croyland Abbey*, p. 4. For other churches that were similarly founded see Sillar and Meyler, *The Symbolic Pig: An Anthology of Pigs in Literature and Art*, pp. 15-7. Compare figs. 26, 4, 42-3.

<sup>903</sup> VG, XVI.

<sup>904</sup> F. Klaeber, *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* (Boston: 1950); Whitelock, *Audience*; C. Chase, ed., *The Dating of Beowulf* (Toronto: 1981); Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia and North, The Origins of Beowulf from Vergil to Wiglaf*.

<sup>905</sup> Perhaps the most thorough and concise analyses of the recent historiography: R.M. Liuzza, "On the Dating of *Beowulf*," in P. Baker ed., *Beowulf: Basic Readings* (New York: 1995); R.E. Bjork and A. Obermeier, "Date, Provenance, Author, Audiences" in R.E. Bjork and J.D. Niles eds., *A Beowulf Handbook* (Nebraska: 1997); R. Frank, "A Scandal in Toronto: *The Dating of 'Beowulf'* a Quarter Century On," *Speculum* 82.4 (2007), 843-64.

provenance.<sup>906</sup> The most recent and 'reliable test' for a narrower date was undertaken by R.D. Fulk who applied "Kaluza's law", concerning when regions dropped the distinction between long and short inflectional endings, in order to argue that *Beowulf* must have been composed before 825 if Northumbrian or more likely, he thinks, before 725 if Mercian.<sup>907</sup> Lapidge too has provided some certainty to this earlier attribution by showing how a copyist's inability to read older forms of script implies that the archetype from which the current manuscript derives must have been earlier than c.750.<sup>908</sup> Subsequently it is not unreasonable to consider that an earlier archetype of the surviving poem *Beowulf* was being written down around the same time that Felix was gathering first hand information and writing his *vita*.

The other approach which has proved suggestively complementary to textual analyses are external analyses placing historical context and attitudes within *Beowulf* to a particular time and place. Contributions are still being made to assessing the context of items, buildings and social explanations, terms, landscape and religious ethos described in the poem. In addition, these studies have often presented divergent provenances for the poem, from Breedon-on –the Hill to Malmesbury; the West Saxon court to a Danish court in England.<sup>909</sup> However, many of these theories are not possible when considered in light of the linguistic evidence for an Anglian provenance before the mid-eighth century. Sam Newton, on the other hand, has proposed that *Beowulf* could have been produced in pre-Viking East Anglia by converging evidence of archaeological sites like Sutton Hoo, the links between Scylding-East Anglian dynasties, and historical evidence to establish that East Anglia had the means of producing and appreciating *Beowulf* – a thesis which marries well with the linguistic analyses that have come forth since he published.<sup>910</sup> Subsequently it is possible to consider a shared provenance for *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci*, first suggested by Dorothy Whitelock over forty years ago. This section will explore the similarities between *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci* in order to consider how they might reflect the culture of East Anglia.

The first element that has been identified as strikingly similar in *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci* are the descriptions of Grendel's Mere and Guthlac's Crowland. Crowland is described as a place in 'a most dismal fen of immense size...consisting of marshes, now of bogs, sometimes of black waters overhung by fog, sometimes studded with wooded islands and

<sup>906</sup> F. Klaeber, *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, p. cviii; K. Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: 1953), pp. 119-39; C. Chase, ed., *The Dating of Beowulf*, p.4; R.D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Bloomington: 1992), pp. 309-25.

<sup>907</sup> R.D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (Bloomington: 1992), p. 390; R.D. Fulk, "Old English Meter and Oral Tradition: Three Issues Bearing on Poetic Chronology," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 106.3 (July 2007), 304-24.

<sup>908</sup> Michael Lapidge, "The archetype of *Beowulf*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 29 (2000).

<sup>909</sup> Some examples: John Hines, "Beowulf and Archaeology-Revisited," in C.E. Karkov and H.Damico eds., *Aedificia Nova*; R. North, *The Origins of Beowulf from Vergil to Wiglaf*; J.D. Niles, 'Understanding *Beowulf*: Oral Poetry Acts,' *Journal of American Folklore* 106 (1993), 131-55; M. Lapidge, "Beowulf, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex," *Studi Medievali* 23.1 (1982).

<sup>910</sup> Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, pp. 132-45.

traversed by the windings of tortuous streams.<sup>911</sup> Its remoteness and uninhabitable state are considered due to the presence of demons while Guthlac's first abode there is likewise unusual because of its connotations of greed, death and pagan practices.<sup>912</sup> The watery landscape even has a role in Guthlac's trials for he is plunged into the 'muddy waters of the black marsh' by the demons on his way to hell while on other occasions, Guthlac's powers ensure that the marsh waters do not harm stolen documents or gloves.<sup>913</sup> Like Guthlac's demons, Grendel and his mother are described as 'haunting the marshes, marauding round the heath and the desolate fens'.<sup>914</sup> The *Beowulf* poet even explains their reason for inhabiting this landscape, something which only the *A* poet does, as due to the fact that Grendel and his mother lived amongst other monsters 'banished' and 'condemned as outcasts' by God for slaying Abel.<sup>915</sup> Hrothgar further explains to Beowulf that he has heard his people tell of a place 'A few miles from here/ a frost-stiffened wood waits and keeps watch/ above a mere; the overhanging bank/ is a maze of tree-roots mirrored in its surface./ At night there, something uncanny happens:/ the water burns. And the mere bottom/ has never been sounded by the sons of men./ On its bank, the heather-stepper halts:/ the hart in flight from pursuing hounds/ will turn to face them with firm-set horns/ and die in the wood rather than dive/ beneath its surface. That is no good place.'<sup>916</sup> These descriptions of the monster Mere and Crowland's Fens evidence a shared superstition that foreboding, marshy landscapes were the places where evil dwelt and where only the bravest dared trespass. Guthlac and Beowulf subsequently meet the need for a hero who will subdue these demons in order to secure Heorot and Crowland as safe havens for human inhabitants.

Furthermore, it is interesting that recent scholarship by Dan Anlezark and Andy Orchard has suggested that this perception of the fenland landscape may even have been shaped by a Virgilian context, in a similar way that we considered the model of Virgil's Aeneas to have influenced the portrayal of Guthlac.<sup>917</sup> Orchard highlights the section in the *Aeneid* which relates that Aeneas enters hell after passing through a misty grove of woods, near a deep cave next to a turbulent lake.<sup>918</sup> Virgil also tells us that this lake is barren and that no birds fly over it, leading the Greeks to call it *Avernus*, the Birdless place.<sup>919</sup> Virgil's descriptions are markedly like those used to describe both Grendel's Mere and Crowland's marshes and the miracle story about swallows attending Guthlac after he has obtained spiritual majority further signify how his victory has

<sup>911</sup> VG, XXIV; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp.86-7.

<sup>912</sup> VG, XXV, XXVIII; Also VCP., XVII.

<sup>913</sup> VG, XXXVII, XL and XXXI: 'et adductum in atrae paludis coenosis laticibus inmerserunt.' Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>914</sup> 'Maere mearc-stapa, se the moras heold, fen ond fasten'; *Beowulf*, ll.103-4; *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, pp.8-9.

<sup>915</sup> 'Weardode'; *Beowulf*, l.105; *Ibid*, pp.8-9. Also GA, ll.200-232.

<sup>916</sup> *Beowulf*, ll.1362-72; *Ibid*, pp.94-5.

<sup>917</sup> Anlezark considers it 'difficult to say' whether the *Beowulf* poet knew the *Aeneid* itself; Daniel Anlezark, *Water and Fire: The Myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: 2006), p. 314.

<sup>918</sup> *Aeneid*, VI.131-9, 236-42, 296 & XII.749-55; Orchard, *Pride & Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters of the Beowulf MS*, p. 44-5.

<sup>919</sup> *Aeneid*, VI.236-42; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, pp. 548-9.

transformed his surroundings.<sup>920</sup> Unfortunately, Virgil's descriptions of hell are not unique amongst other Classical descriptions of the Underworld. Orchard has identified descriptions of dark, foreboding groves beside lakes in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Claudius' *Carmen* and *De Raptu Proserpinae*.<sup>921</sup> What corroborates, however, Virgil's *Aeneid* having influenced the *Beowulf* poet is the motif shared amongst them that giants were confined to the deepest pit of hell, reached only after crossing a poisonous lake.<sup>922</sup> The lake in which Grendel's mother's hall lies has 'never been sounded by the sons of men' while giants are said to be among the condemned creatures living with Grendel.<sup>923</sup> Indeed, when Grendel plunges into his marsh-den, mortally wounded by Beowulf, it is explained that 'hell claimed him there', as befits not only his race but his home.<sup>924</sup> Anlezark explains that Grendel and his mother are marked perpetually as cursed by God to be outlaws of human society, making Beowulf's decision to seek them out in the Mere either his 'destiny or moral choice'.<sup>925</sup>

Furthermore, Virgil's description of the deepest pit of hell as the abode of giants necessitates a further look at the descriptions used for the monsters and devils of *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci*. Dorothy Whitelock first identified that the *Beowulf* poet's use of *eald gewinna* (the old enemy) and *feond moncynnes* (the enemy of mankind) for Grendel's kind were strikingly like Felix's descriptions of Guthlac's demons as *Antiquus hostis proles humanae*.<sup>926</sup> Use of these terms also surface at similar points in the narrative development for the devils attack Guthlac after he sings psalms and hymns at his newly established hermitage while Grendel's attack is precipitated by hearing songs of Creation sung in the newly built Heorot. The similarities continue when both Guthlac's demons and Grendel are described as *semen Cain/ Caines cynne*.<sup>927</sup> This term for Guthlac's adversaries did not carry through into any of the Old English variations of the Guthlac narrative though it was used by the *Beowulf* poet, leading Whitelock and Newton to suggest that this supports an East Anglian provenance for this poem.<sup>928</sup> Whitelock further explains that Grendel and his mother were described as 'seeds of Cain' as a way of fitting water-monsters into an Anglo-Saxon world-view of Creation.<sup>929</sup> Such considerations may reveal how a 'wider East Anglian interest in monster lore', influenced by an imaginative rationalization of this

<sup>920</sup> VG, XXXVII-XXXIX. So too do the water monsters cease attacking Beowulf after he has killed Grendel's mother; *Beowulf*, ll.1620-2.

<sup>921</sup> Lucan's *Pharsalia*, III.399-425, IV.642-51; Claudius' *Carmen*, XXVI and *De Raptu Proserpinae*, III.332-56 and others, cited by Orchard, *Pride & Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters of the Beowulf MS*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>922</sup> *Aeneid*, VI. 236-41, 577-84; Ezekiel 32.18, 27; Anlezark, *Water and Fire: The Myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 315.

<sup>923</sup> 'Gigantas'; *Beowulf*, ll. 113, 1367; *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, pp.10-1, 94-5.

<sup>924</sup> *Beowulf*, ll. 850-1; *Ibid*, pp.56-7.

<sup>925</sup> Anlezark, *Water and Fire: The Myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 315

<sup>926</sup> VG, XXIX; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 94-5; *Beowulf*, ll.164b,1776a; *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, pp.12-3, 122-3. Whitelock, *Audience*, p.82; Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, p. 143; Mayr-Harting, *Christianity*, pp. 229-39.

<sup>927</sup> *Beowulf*, ll.102-114, 1261b-1265a; VG, XXXI; Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 80-2.

<sup>928</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 29, 80-2, 104-5; Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, p.143.

<sup>929</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, pp. 76-80.

dreary landscape, could be explained using Christian thought and Germanic, heroic contexts.<sup>930</sup> Nor were *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci* unique in explaining Virgilian descriptions of monsters within a Christian world-view.

The *Beowulf* manuscript also contains a text known as the *Liber Monstrorum* which Orchard's recent study has argued relied upon Virgil as its 'single most important source'.<sup>931</sup> While comparisons to the *Vita Guthlaci* would be difficult to make because of their genre differences, both texts use Virgilian terms like *gurgites*,<sup>932</sup> *hispidis*,<sup>933</sup> *fulgorem*<sup>934</sup> and *defodiens*<sup>935</sup> and these words appear in chapters of the *Vita Guthlaci* which have already been identified as influenced by the *Aeneid*. The *Liber Monstrorum* even borrows the phrase *belua Lernaehorrendum stridens* from the *Aeneid* to describe the serpents in its version of the tale of Laocoön.<sup>936</sup> Felix, meanwhile, borrowed *squamea colla* from this same passage to enhance the serpentine movements of beast-shaped demons in a vision influenced by the *Vita Antonii*.<sup>937</sup> The use of this episode by the author of the *Liber Monstrorum* lends weight to the idea that this Virgilian episode was well-known.<sup>938</sup> Indeed, this episode also appears to have influenced the description of the snakes that curl around the decapitated Holofernes in *Judith*, which also survives in the *Beowulf* manuscript.<sup>939</sup> Use of Virgilian descriptions by the texts of the *Beowulf* manuscript and the *Vita Guthlaci* testify to the popularity of this work as a source for familiar monstrous descriptions.

Finally, there are the comparisons to be made between the heroic characteristics of Beowulf and Guthlac themselves. It has already been suggested that Virgil's Aeneas provided a model for Felix's Guthlac although the similar nature of the fenland landscape and its monsters means that Guthlac and Beowulf as warriors dealt with their situations in a similar manner. Both isolated themselves from their men in order to single-handedly battle demons living in fenland habitats, after the ancient foes were aroused by song to attack.<sup>940</sup> Whitelock has identified that Beowulf placed his trust in God, arming himself only with spiritual weapons as he waits for Grendel.<sup>941</sup> Indeed, the *Beowulf* poet reveals that 'the King of Glory had posted a look-out' who would protect Beowulf as he had 'placed complete trust in his strength of limb and the Lord's

<sup>930</sup> For instance, *shuck* is an East Anglian spectral dog, from the Old English *scucca*, meaning devil/demon; a word used to describe Grendel; Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia*, p. 144.

<sup>931</sup> *Aeneid*, VI.462; VII.440, 452; *Georgics*, I.72; *Aeneid*, III.451; Orchard, *Pride & Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters of the Beowulf MS*, pp. 89, 91. Wright has shown that the monstrous descriptions were some of the most popular Virgilian borrowings in Breton hagiography; *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Hampshire: 1995), pp. 174-5.

<sup>932</sup> VG, XVIII; *Liber Monstrorum*, I.6, II.9.

<sup>933</sup> VG, XXXI; *Liber Monstrorum*, Prologus.

<sup>934</sup> VG, XXXI; *Liber Monstrorum*, Prologus.

<sup>935</sup> VG, XXXVI; *Liber Monstrorum*, I.9.

<sup>936</sup> *Aeneid*, VI.287-8; Orchard, *Pride & Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters of the Beowulf MS*, p. 91. Fig.42.

<sup>937</sup> VG, XXXI; *Liber Monstrorum*, III.10; *Ibid*, p. 311.

<sup>938</sup> To be discussed further in chapter 6. See fig.9.

<sup>939</sup> *Judith*, II.107-121.

<sup>940</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, p. 81.

<sup>941</sup> *Beowulf*, II.1742-7; *Ibid*, pp. 80-94.

favour.<sup>942</sup> This poem describes all the armour that Beowulf removes in expectation of Grendel's attack. When Guthlac anticipates that he is going to be attacked by the demons, he too wears no armour yet is told to have spiritually armed himself, in the words of Paul's Ephesians 6.11-17.<sup>943</sup> These two warriors do not require man-made weapons in order to succeed at their tasks; their beliefs ensure their victory over an evil foe. Thus, their faith is rewarded by a Protector who was 'a guard against monsters'.<sup>944</sup> In *Beowulf*, Christ may be presumed to have been his protector, while in the *Vita Guthlaci*, Felix explains God's protection is evidenced through the assistance of St Bartholomew. The similarities between Beowulf and Guthlac reveal not that their authors were indebted to each other, but that they produced works that reflect a similar environment and thought-world that reinterpreted Germanic heroic battles within a Christian context.

The similarities of concept, language and form between *Beowulf* and the *Vita Guthlaci* may in fact help to explain the perceived discrepancies in the latter text as evidencing a synthesis of heroic and Christian traditions. It is possible that this kind of synthesis was not all that unorthodox, if we consider, as Wormald did, how in the period when these texts were created, the 'thought-world of the early medieval clergy was dominated by conceptions of nobility, church and service to the king'.<sup>945</sup> Such considerations might explain Felix's atypical use of sources and adaptation of his hagiographical genre by considering that Felix was able to write this kind of *vita* because he knew it would be received and appreciated by a Christian audience that still had a 'curiosity' about monsters and legends from their cultural past.<sup>946</sup> The heroic material embedded in the Guthlac narrative implies that this material was not initially considered anomalous or inappropriate. Moreover, since this *vita* was commissioned by the East Anglian king, we might even consider that it was relevant to this patron's political and social context to include so many references to Guthlac's lineage, career and testified appeal. The hypothesis that *Beowulf* could also have been composed in East Anglia, maybe even for the same king, would substantiate that in King Ælfwald we find a patron of heroic, Christian literature, which ties him and his forbears dynastically and spiritually to legendary figures. The analysis of Felix's sources undertaken in this chapter and chapter four reveal that he applied both hagiographical and heroic models to the Guthlac narrative in order to elevate his subject and appeal to an audience that included Christian kings.

Nevertheless, Felix's *vita* was composed in a language, style and genre that required a high level of literacy that we cannot be sure Ælfwald possessed. There had to have been some way of reading or reciting Latin tales of this period in the court because dedications begin to show that interest in books was becoming no longer exclusively monastic. Aldhelm compiled and addressed his *Epistola ad Acircium* to King Aldfrith and Bede dedicated his monumental

<sup>942</sup> *Beowulf*, ll. 665-70; *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, pp.44-5.

<sup>943</sup> VG, XXVII.

<sup>944</sup> *Beowulf*, l.667; *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, pp.44-5.

<sup>945</sup> Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy," p. 53.

<sup>946</sup> Green, *Anglo-Saxon Audiences*, p. 7.

*Ecclesiastical history of the English People* to King Ceolwulf, providing two examples of royal interest in books.<sup>947</sup> Indeed, this same history tells the story of Cædmon who can miraculously turn biblical stories into vernacular poetry, and it is recorded in the same chapter that he is not the only man who can do this.<sup>948</sup> These references suggests that there were those who had the ability to translate stories upon request and that while some were attached to monasteries, there may have been poets at court who functioned similarly. Such questions are difficult to answer although the potential of the *Vita Guthlaci* as a tale as fit for service at the altar as for the lord's hall has been substantiated by this analysis of Felix's choice of models and sources.<sup>949</sup> In fact, Dorothy Whitelock suggests that it would not have unreasonable for *Beowulf* to have been read over three sittings, as suggested by narrative divisions in the text.<sup>950</sup> Felix's *vita* bears similar narrative divisions so perhaps it is not unreasonable to consider that sections could also be turned into hall entertainments of suitable lengths. The *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* preserved the Guthlac legend in a genre and language acceptable to the church yet it was probably made available to its patron and his court orally, perhaps through epic tales as well as sermons.

The later epitomes that were made of Felix's *vita* did not remove any of its heroic content over time nor did they effectively alter it to other purposes than those used initially by Felix. It is possible that this material was so imbedded in the legend and its popularity to have been inseparable in later periods. Certainly the Guthlac poems of the Exeter book were able to heroically develop particular episodes independently of the full narrative because they could dismiss relating further background by referring to what 'books tell us' or 'we have heard'.<sup>951</sup> However, it is also likely that when Crowland acquired the remains of martyred Earl Waltheof, he supplanted Guthlac not only on account of his novelty. Guthlac, by virtue of his own conversion and extreme asceticism, could be adapted to the ideals of the new Benedictine reforms and this may have been the reason why Orderic Vitalis reserved his most commanding language for Waltheof's epitaph rather than his epitome of Felix.<sup>952</sup>

Only Henry of Avranches' metrical *vita* restores the heroic visualization of Guthlac's militaristic and spiritual careers to the prominence they originally had. He was able to do this by directly consulting Felix's text in conjunction with more recent epitomes. In addition, Henry of Avranches invented the anecdote that Guthlac was presented with a scourge by Bartholomew to defend himself against demonic attacks.<sup>953</sup> This invention relates Guthlac taking a more active role in the defence of his soul and hermitage than all previous accounts. It also contrasts with the testimony found earlier on in this metrical *vita* and every other text in the dossier that Guthlac had

<sup>947</sup> HE, Prologue and Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1994), p. 6.

<sup>948</sup> HE, IV.24.

<sup>949</sup> Wieland, "Aures Lectoris: Orality and Literacy in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*," p. 176.

<sup>950</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*, p. 20.

<sup>951</sup> i.e. GA, II.93-132; GB, II.878-893; Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 252-3, 271.

<sup>952</sup> Compare Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, pp. 324-339, 348-51.

<sup>953</sup> MVG, II. 525-37; Bolton, "Thesis," p. 60.



given up weapons in favour of spiritual armour.<sup>954</sup> Nevertheless, it appears to have been a popular addition to the legend, due to its prominence amongst the Harley medallions and Crowland's west front.<sup>955</sup> Perhaps Crowland's relic provided Abbot Henry de Longchamp with a means of revitalizing and transforming the original heroic appeal of St Guthlac in a way that encouraged pilgrims to his neglected abbey.

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<sup>954</sup> *MVG*, ll. 89-95; *Ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>955</sup> See figs. 7, 8, 9, 19, 26, 30-2.

## Chapter VI

### THE ROLE OF VISIONS IN THE GUTHLAC DOSSIER

When the exile Æthelbald came to Crowland after Guthlac's death, Felix writes that he was *sperans in Domino daturum sibi refocillationem aliquam laboris sui per intercessionem tanti viri Guthlaci*.<sup>956</sup> In the night his prayers are answered when he is granted a vision in which Guthlac's spirit promises that the Mercian throne will soon be his. This was the final vision recorded by Felix in a narrative punctuated by Guthlac's own visionary experiences and by his prophetic disclosure of information to visitors. In fact, many of these visions must have been considered integral for they were retained throughout later revisions to the narrative. Some visions even became the focus of new materials, like *Guthlac A* and Vercelli homily XXIII. Analysis of their role is subsequently not only integral to the development of Guthlac's character and the resolution of conflict in the narrative but potentially significant to our understanding of this saint's appeal. As the last chapter argued how the heroic elements in the Guthlac dossier might have been intended to appeal to a wider audience, this chapter will follow onwards to investigate the prominent role of visions and ultimately question, what role visions had in the development of this cult. This chapter will begin by considering the traditions that defined the visions in the Guthlac narrative before investigating their significance amongst contemporary visionary accounts.

#### The Antonine framework of the legend's origins

Part of the reason that visions are such an integral component of the Guthlac narrative is that they were one of the manifestations of sanctity that both tested and revealed a hermit's spiritual majority and Guthlac was celebrated as a saintly hermit, not as a monk or priest. Felix's *vita* set forth the legend that Guthlac chose to become a hermit after only two years of monastic living because he had been influenced by reading about the lives of the Desert Fathers.<sup>957</sup> Whether the historical Guthlac was actually influenced this way is irrelevant. What is relevant is that Felix was intent on developing his subject to imitate the Desert Fathers by directly referencing their influence and through textual mimicry that would have been recognized by an audience familiar with their stories.<sup>958</sup> Tales of the Desert Fathers set out the tradition that only through a lifestyle of ascetic living and solitary prayer could hermits both hope to communicate with God's representatives and draw the unseen hordes of demons into battle, making their

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<sup>956</sup> "...hoping in the Lord that he would grant him some respite from his affliction by the intercession of that great man Guthlac." VG, LII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 164-5.

<sup>957</sup> VG, XXIV; *Ibid*, pp. 86-7.

<sup>958</sup> Ciccacese, "Osservazioni Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice;" Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*; Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac."

model of greater relevance than any other contemporary hagiography for the expectations that define this lifestyle.<sup>959</sup> Most relevantly, the *Vita Antonii* explains that demons 'hate all Christians' but monks and virgins more, setting traps to break their resolve because 'prayers and fasting...cause the demons to collapse'.<sup>960</sup> Because of this, Anthony's demons retaliate with psychological and physical attacks which God permits and observes as a test of faith, like the biblical Job. Only once he has been sufficiently tested, is Anthony granted a heavenly vision, explaining why. Anthony still experiences some demonic interference after this victory, although his abilities to heal and prophesize evidence his attainment of spiritual majority. The *Vita Antonii* sets out many kinds of visions which could be experienced by solitaries, including some advice on how to distinguish between divine visions and demonic ones; Anthony explains that 'when a vision appears to you, demand boldly of it who it is and where it comes from; if it is a holy apparition, the angel's comfort will immediately turn your fear into joy'.<sup>961</sup> This *vita* established the structural conventions regarding how visions are experienced by solitaries, at what point in their development certain kinds of visions can be expected, and how a hermit should trust their instincts when responding to them.

The fact that Guthlac is engaged by spiritual forces after settling into his solitary life indicates, in Kurtz' words, that he is 'approved' both to receive angelic assistance and to be tempted by demons in simulation of Anthony.<sup>962</sup> Individual episodes relate how Guthlac endures terrifying visions whose purpose is to make him despair, improperly fast, commit the sin of pride, relinquish his solitude, lust, and fear Satan's power in order to prove his unsuitability as a *miles Christi* according to Athanasius' conventions. In fact, the *Vita Antonii* has long been identified as the source for many of the demonic visions which Felix chose for his subject, especially the night-time cacophony of bestial demons which later epitomes may have omitted due to the absence of any original material, but also the technique for, and the demons' reactions to, their defeat.<sup>963</sup> Guthlac's spiritual development likewise adheres to the Antonine model in that he has to prove his faith in the face of temptation before he is granted succour. The climactic temptation usually relates how the saint is physically assaulted and, in *Guthlac A* only, shown a vision of monastic misbehaviour to tempt him to vainglory, before being dragged to the mouth of hell.<sup>964</sup> It is at this juncture that we can be assured his faith has been proven, for God intervenes to stop the demons, sending St Bartholomew to his rescue and promising him future protection or escorting

<sup>959</sup> Hill, "Drawing the Demon's Sting: A Note on a Traditional Motif in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*." The only exception might be Cuthbert's time living on the Farne islands; *BVC*, XVII. Consideration of sources and their functions was treated in chapter 4.

<sup>960</sup> See *VA*, X, XXI-III; White, ed., *Early Christian Lives*, pp. 16, 22-4.

<sup>961</sup> *VA*, XLIII; *Ibid*, pp. 35-6.

<sup>962</sup> Kurtz, "St Anthony to St Guthlac," pp. 108-116. Kurtz also identifies that Anthony's temptations are reminiscent of the eight temptations outlined by Cassian in his *Institutes*, V-XII.

<sup>963</sup> Guthlac often makes the sign of the cross or sings psalms to make the demons disappear; a technique set out first by Anthony; i.e. *VG*, XXXIV; *VA*, XII. Also *Ibid*, pp. 108-16; Ciccacese, "Osservazione Sulle Fonti E i Modelli Della *Vita Guthlaci* Di Felice," p. 139.

<sup>964</sup> *GA*, II.403-529; Hill, "The Middle Way: *Idel-Wuldor* and *Egesa* in the Old English *Guthlac A*."

him directly to heaven, depending upon the version.<sup>965</sup> Furthermore, the versions that recount Guthlac's return to his hermitage after his victory over the demons also relate how the hermit was miraculously able to prophesy, heal and control wildlife in evidence of his spiritual majority.<sup>966</sup> Use of the *Vita Antonii* in Evagrius' translation is unquestionably discernible in how Felix wanted Guthlac's visions and spiritual development to be perceived by his audience and this legacy clearly became an inseparable component of the legend. It was probably an obvious choice, being the most famous hermit *vita* in circulation, although as shown in the previous chapters, it was not the only influence. St Anthony's visions invaluable provided an established framework for visionary episodes and overall spiritual development that would have been accepted by the ecclesiastical audience responsible for approving, and managing, the dossier for this cult.

### **The influence of other traditions upon the dossier**

Other traditions appear to have influenced and supplemented the Antonine visions and structure for spiritual development, particularly in regards to prophesy and otherworldly experience in the Guthlac narrative. This is not unexpected, considering that since pre-Christian times, prophesies had been discerned through a vision or visionary experience which could be interpreted to indicate the correct path, often through the dreamer's experience of the supernatural world. The Sibyls of the ancient world had been renowned for giving enigmatic prophesies that came to them in their isolation and trances though eventually, books of Sibylline prophesies came to be preserved in Apollo's temple on the Palatine hill.<sup>967</sup> Specifically, Book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid* relates how Aeneas sought the Cumaean Sibyl for foreknowledge about his voyage to Rome and ultimately, passage to the Underworld so that his father's spirit could confirm the prophesy. The Sibyl discerns from Apollo that the journey will be difficult but Aeneas, unfazed, responds that '*omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi*.'<sup>968</sup> However much foreknowledge Aeneas as hero possesses, he still requires the Sibyl's guidance to traverse the Underworld and find his father Anchises. She provides him with specific instructions for preparations and guides him onwards when he becomes distracted by the sites and by the shades of those whom he once knew. Accordingly, Virgil's depiction of the Sibyl substantiates the role the spiritual guide had in discerning visions and keeping the dreamer on their course; a representation which was adaptable to a Christian context.

<sup>965</sup> Guthlac returns to his hermitage following his victory over the demons in *VG*, *GB*, *OEVG*, Orderic Vitalis' *Abbrevatio*, the Harley Roll, *PVG*, and *MVG*. He proceeds directly to heaven only in *GA* and Vercelli Homily XXIII.

<sup>966</sup> The most detailed accounts of these miracles are found in *VG*, XXXVII-L, Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 116-51; *OEVG*, IX- XX, Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*, pp. 48-93; *PVG*, pp. 709-14; *MVG*, ll. 952-1324, Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 77-93.

<sup>967</sup> Smith, *The Primacy of Vision in Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 6-10.

<sup>968</sup> 'all this have I foreseen and debated in my mind,' *Aeneid* VI, l.105; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, pp. 540-1. Aeneas' foreknowledge is to be short lived for when he exits the Underworld by the gate of delusive dreams it erases his memory for his arrival in Rome in Book VII.

Even more invaluable to a Christian context were the detailed descriptions of the Underworld's landscape which Aeneas and the Sibyl pass through. These descriptions serve to explain not only the process after death, but how the destination of souls is determined by one's lifetime actions. For instance, Palinurus, Aeneas' drowned navigator, explains to his former captain that he is unable to cross the Styx into the Underworld because his remains are unburied.<sup>969</sup> Aeneas also sees how on the other side of the marshes, Minos, Rhadamanthus and Aecus judge each soul and determine whether it will proceed to Elysium, like those who have been brave warriors, or whether it will suffer eternal torments in Tartarus, like those who have murdered their sire.<sup>970</sup> Descriptions of infinite torments such as rolling a huge stone or having one's liver picked at continuously are meant to be terrifyingly cautionary of certain actions, just as descriptions of souls' dancing and sporting in Elysium are intended to illustrate the rewards of a just life. In fact, Virgil writes that Anchises led his son throughout Elysium in order to 'kind[le] his soul with longing for the glory that was to be', so that the trials to come might be put in perspective. One final notable aspect of Virgil's Underworld is that it has *gemmae Somni portae* through which true and false dreams enter the world and through which Aeneas and the Sibyl are able to return.<sup>971</sup> Such a feature indicates the association here between sleeping dreams and traversable visions which influenced many later visionary accounts, including those ascribed to Guthlac. The *Aeneid* was one of the earliest accounts widely disseminated in the medieval world to relate how prophesies could be discerned through communion with the Gods and their prophets and that the way that one lived had a direct bearing upon their soul's destination. It was compatible within a Christian context because it was seen as a precursor, foreshadowing Christ and biblical prophesies regarding the soul's fate at the End of Days. Le Goff cogently validates the interpretation of pre-Christian vision accounts, like those composed by Macrobius, Virgil and Cicero, by qualifying that 'it was the character of medieval culture and mentality to elaborate what it had inherited from the past.'<sup>972</sup> Thus we might expect to find similarities to Aeneas' journey to the Underworld in Guthlac's own vision of hell because it seeks to qualify Guthlac's former pagan life within a context of significant repentance.

Felix explains that Guthlac was dragged by demons to see hell as a final attempt by them to terrify the hermit into quitting the Fens. At first glance, the landscape which he beholds appears to lack Virgil's segmented geography when it states that demons run around using

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<sup>969</sup> *Aeneid* IV; Ibid, pp. 557-9.

<sup>970</sup> *Aeneid* IV; Ibid, pp. 563-79.

<sup>971</sup> *Aeneid* VI, ll. 893-6; Ibid, pp. 596-7.

<sup>972</sup> Jacques Le Goff, "Dreams in Culture and Collective Psychology," in *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: 1980), pp. 203-4; "Visions," in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 462-3. The *Aeneid* was interpreted by Fulgentius as showing the progression of spiritual life of an individual, encompassing birth (the shipwreck), adolescence (hunting and sex) and spiritual majority/adulthood (descent into hell and fulfillment of destiny); C. Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the 12<sup>th</sup> c. to Chaucer* (Cambridge: 1995), p.10. Comparetti also notes that the *Aeneid* made 'possible the idea of Empire, connection between politics and religion, past and present'; *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, trans. by E.F.M. Benecke (London: 1966), pp. 172-82.

'*innumerabiles tormentorum species*' against the souls of the wicked.<sup>973</sup> Yet Ciccarese's analysis of Felix's sources and models points out that though Felix's hell was not overly descriptive, he did '*preferisce tutta una serie di immagini di stampo virgiliano*'.<sup>974</sup> The demons warn that they have been permitted to torture Guthlac because '*En ignis, quem accendisti in delictis tuis, te consumere paratus est*', implying that his sins of lust have designated this particular punishment for him. They also draw Guthlac's attention, and by extension, his audience's, around the scene to touch upon features named in the *Aeneid*; '*...en tibi patulis hiatibus igniflua Herebi hostia patescunt; nunc Stigiae fibrae te vorare malunt, tibi quoque aestivi Acherontis voragines horrendis faucibus hiscunt*'.<sup>975</sup> The progression of souls after death may be absent but the threats and place-names provided by the demons support Ciccarese's theory that Felix envisioned hell in Virgilian terms.

It would not be unreasonable to consider that Guthlac could have been conceived of as a type of Aeneas in this episode, who must brave the Underworld in order to receive validation of his path from his father. Guthlac is a similarly worthy hero, whose choices may either damn him to the eternal fire or grant him peace in the neutral region where renowned warriors reside. Moreover, Guthlac's rescue from hell by St Bartholomew validates that his sins have been judged and he has been accepted into the communion of saints, imitating St Anthony's development. Yet even here, Ciccarese significantly notes the '*stampo virgiliano*' in Bartholomew's descent from the '*aethereis sedibus radiantis Olympi*', emphasizing his indebtedness.<sup>976</sup> Clearly, the *Aeneid* may have recommended itself due to the heroic and visionary qualities of its central character and this theory may be further supported through considering two other visions.

The influence of the *Aeneid* is also discernable in two other visions documented by Felix. In fact, what first led me to explore this connection was Colgrave's original identification of short phrases directly borrowed from the *Aeneid*. Both these visions follow Guthlac's safe return to his hermitage under the direction of St Bartholomew and their function appears somewhat redundant after Guthlac's climactic victory over the demons, shortly before. In addition, all of these visions occurred at night, while Guthlac was engaged in prayers or '*sopore opprimeretur*', implying the legacy of Virgil's association between sleep, visions and the supernatural world. The first of these visions relates how Guthlac fell suddenly into a 'dream-filled sleep' from which he awoke to the shouts of a British-speaking army who set alight his buildings and held him aloft on their spear points. Two short phrases, '*arrectis auribus adst(ans)*' and '*domus...flamma superante ardere*',

<sup>973</sup> VG, XXXI; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>974</sup> Ciccarese, "Osservazione Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della Vita Guthlaci Di Felice," p. 142.

<sup>975</sup> '*Behold! the fire which you have kindled by your lusts has been prepared to consume you. Behold! the bowels of the Styx long to devour you and the hot gulfs of Acheron gape with dreadful jaws.*' VG, XXXI; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 106-7. Also Ciccarese, "Osservazione Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della Vita Guthlaci Di Felice," p. 142. These features did not translate into the OEVG or Vercelli homily XXIII.

<sup>976</sup> VG, XXXII; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, p. 106. Ciccarese, "Osservazione Sulle Fonti e i Modelli Della Vita Guthlaci Di Felice," p. 142.

draw our attention to Book II of the *Aeneid* where they originate in close proximity.<sup>977</sup> The context of these borrowings strikingly relates how Aeneas awoke to find Troy under siege after dreaming that Hector has come to warn him that the city is falling to the Greeks.<sup>978</sup> Both soldiers in their own separate tales, awake alert and ready to fight for their homes and Aeneas, in looking down at his beloved city, also finds its buildings aflame. The structure of Guthlac's vision, from prophetic dream to waking realization of its implications, indicates a strong likelihood that Felix was again influenced by the visions of Virgil's *Aeneid*. This vision sought a break from the past for both heroes; Aeneas from Troy and Guthlac from the British, so that they might go forth to fulfil their respective destinies. Indeed, in *The Primacy of Vision in Virgil's Aeneid*, Riggs Alden Smith argues how this particular vision served to unite the future and past in order for Aeneas to glean future instruction.<sup>979</sup> Its application to Guthlac's newly obtained spiritual majority might suggest that he too should interpret the vision as a break from his past but not without letting it inform his future path, perhaps through transferring his militaristic skills to his spiritual career.

The second vision which indicates the influence of the *Aeneid* follows the vision of British soldiers and is less obviously imitative because it is imbedded in an episode closely reproduced from the *Vita Sancti Antonii*. This vision relates how in the night Guthlac is accosted, first by the sound, then the horrible appearance of monstrous creatures which invade his cell. Amidst the borrowings and allusions to Evagrius' *vita*, Felix has used '*squamea coll(a)*', again from Book II of the *Aeneid*.<sup>980</sup> The passage in which this phrase originates describes the movements of two terrible serpents who come from the sea to devour Laocoön and his sons for preaching against Sinon's plans for the wooden horse. The serpents were in fact sent by Athena to frighten the Trojans into believing that Laocoön was a false priest, rather than the true prophet of Troy's doom.<sup>981</sup> The sufferings endured by another true, albeit pre-Christian, priest cannot be considered out of place in a vision designed, and supported by hagiographical convention, to expose an 'approved' hermit's faith, particularly when juxtaposed beside an episode relating how the clerk Becel became tempted by the demons to murder Guthlac.<sup>982</sup> The contextual allusions and linguistic borrowings from the *Aeneid* which relate specifically to visions indicate Felix's reliance upon Virgil to supplement the Biblical and hagiographical accounts that were available. Its use, in spite of existing Christian sources, might indicate one or two possibilities; that the *Aeneid* was so widely disseminated amongst monastic schools as to have been a definitive source for visions or more likely, that specific similarities between Guthlac and Aeneas recommended the use of this visionary, heroic epic in the account of an equally visionary, hero who transformed into a more suitable *miles Christi*.

<sup>977</sup> VG, XXXIV; *Aeneid* II, ll. 303, 11; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 108-11.

<sup>978</sup> *Aeneid* II, ll. 268-317; *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, pp. 334-7.

<sup>979</sup> Smith, *The Primacy of Vision in Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 95-6.

<sup>980</sup> VG, XXXVI; *Aeneid* II, l. 208; Colgrave, ed., *Felix's Life*, pp. 114-8.

<sup>981</sup> Laocoön's speech against the Trojan horse which he impales with his spear is found in *Aeneid* II, ll. 40-53, 199-49;

*Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, pp. 318-9, 330-3. Fig. 42.

<sup>982</sup> VG, XXXV.

While the *Aeneid* clearly influenced some of the visions recorded by Felix, there were numerous other Christian visionary accounts which both contributed to this tradition and supplemented other visions in the Guthlac dossier. The Book of Revelations may have supplied the *A* poet with the visualization of hell as an abyss or bottomless pit in the ground, for certainly it was this source that described how the souls of the faithful would dwell in the new Jerusalem after being judged before God's throne.<sup>983</sup> Another detail which may have derived from John's vision is the use of the cross as both sign and symbol. Jane Roberts has already explored use of this concept in the Guthlac dossier, pointing out how though in the Old English *Andreas* the saint bears a cross on his forehead like the faithful in Revelation 9.IV (Ez.9.IV), Guthlac's mark was visible in God's fiery hand descending to mark the door of the house where his mother was giving birth. She failed to note that the Vespasian *life* describes Guthlac as *'hine sylfne getacnode insegle Cristes rode*.<sup>984</sup> Nonetheless she does consider the *A* poet's description of Guthlac setting up a cross on the hill where he will do battle a symbol of Guthlac's claim on God's behalf.<sup>985</sup> Allusions such as these reveal how different redactors of the Guthlac narrative explained or adapted visions using sources with which they were familiar.

In fact, the very different visionary account in the Book of Daniel may have provided an exemplar for the prophetic advising of kings, so vital to the development of this cult. While Guthlac did not earn his place as Æthelbald's spiritual advisor by interpreting this king's dreams, he did appear to Æthelbald one night in a vision to inform that he had successfully interceded on his behalf for the Mercian throne. In Felix's version only, the hopeful king asked Guthlac's apparition for a sign to prove what would come to pass and is promised that food will miraculously arrive the next day.<sup>986</sup> Guthlac's prophesy, combined with his succour of the exile, sought to outline how Æthelbald obtained his throne through faith and obedience to God. Indeed, Æthelbald's gratitude was also suitably displayed in this version through relating how the king made pilgrimage, supplication and gifts to Crowland in thanks for the prophesy's fulfilment. This exemplar is in total apposition to Nebuchadnezzar, who failed to learn obedience and significant repentance from his visions and was deposed and cast into poverty as a result.<sup>987</sup> The message for those who would ask a saint to intercede on their behalf is clear, perhaps even clearer by the removal of Æthelbald's request for proof by the Old English redactor.<sup>988</sup> These biblical accounts served to establish the Christian context for these kinds of visions, though their influence was not as marked as the *Aeneid*.

<sup>983</sup> Rev. 20.I-XV; GA, ll. 557-63, 781-818; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 100, 106-7.

<sup>984</sup> 'he signed himself with the mark of Christ's rood'; OEVG, II; Goodwin, ed., *A-S Version*, pp. 16-7; *Andreas*, l. 1340. The hand of God appears in VG, V-VII; OEM, April 11 and all three variants of the *South English Legendary*; Roberts, "Seals of the Cross," pp. 124-5. Also Henderson, *Vision and Image in Early Christian England*, p. 215.

<sup>985</sup> GA, ll. 176-81b; Roberts, "Seals of the Cross," p. 124.

<sup>986</sup> VG, LII; OEVG, XXI; Dan.2 &4.

<sup>987</sup> Compare Dan. 4.30-7 and VG, LI-II.

<sup>988</sup> Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Lives."



Part of the reason why this might have been the case is that neither of these biblical accounts really explored the fate of souls in the same detail that the *Aeneid* or some apocryphal texts had. This next section will explore the influence that two apocryphal texts; *The Questions of St Bartholomew* and the *Vision of St Paul* had upon the visionary aspects of the Guthlac dossier. The *Questions of St Bartholomew* is one text which may have met the need for more detailed descriptions of the consequences of sins. It describes in detail Christ's harrowing of hell, the Annunciation as redeeming Eve's sin, the apostles' viewing of a bottomless pit, Satan's account of his doings and a detailed series of questions, giving name to this text, about the deadly sins. The punishments for 'hypocrites, backbiters, jesters, idolaters, the covetous, adulterers, wizards, diviners and those who believe in devils or deceive' (in this order) are provided in greater detail than the Book of Revelations, as is the unusual explanation that sin first came into the world when Eve drank the water that Satan had poisoned with his sweat and became desirous.<sup>989</sup> To begin with, Graham Jones was the first to consider that Guthlac's choice of spiritual advisor was due to the fact that Bartholomew was recorded to have had similar experiences in the apocryphal *Questions*.<sup>990</sup> Bartholomew had also seen into Tartarus, as it was called in both legends, and been granted power over its demons by Christ, making his spiritual friendship with Guthlac a reflection of the relationship described between Christ and Bartholomew in this text.<sup>991</sup> And this is not the only resonance that has been identified; an excellent article tracing the prominent motif of Eve's *biter drync*, used to explain Guthlac's foreknowledge of his impending death in *Guthlac B*, identifies the *Questions* as one of its possible sources.<sup>992</sup> Nor did the influence of this text cease in later adaptations of the Guthlac legend for Henderson unearthed an obscure reference from the twelfth century by one Rahere who claimed that Guthlac had been borne into the sky on a griffin, seen a bottomless pit, and been rescued by Bartholomew.<sup>993</sup> It is very likely that the *Questions* supplied information about Bartholomew that recommended him as spiritual advisor and model for Guthlac while providing desired explanations about the origins, consequences, and redemption of sin in the world.

The *Visio Sancti Pauli* is another apocryphal text which contributed details to the explanations of hell and the fate of souls described in certain Guthlacian materials, substantiating the use of supplementary visionary accounts by the dossier's different authors. Paul's vision focused extensively upon the fate of souls after death, contributing specific themes to this tradition in the form of a dialogue between the body and soul as they prepare to separate, the correspondence of punishment to the sin, and a designated respite from suffering for the

<sup>989</sup> James, "The Apocryphal New Testament," p. 166. Especially III.37 for punishments of sins and III.59 for Eve's bitter drink.

<sup>990</sup> Jones, "Ghostly Mentor, Teacher of Mysteries: Bartholomew, Guthlac and the Apostle's Cult in Early Medieval England," pp. 140-2.

<sup>991</sup> *Questions*, III.12-7; VG, XXXI.

<sup>992</sup> GB, II. 865b-871a, 980b-999a; Hall, "A Gregorian Model for Eve's *Biter Drync* in *Guthlac B*."

<sup>993</sup> E.A. Webb, *The Records of St Bartholomew's Priory* (Oxford: 1921), p.81 cited by Henderson, "Imagery of St Guthlac," p. 81.

damned.<sup>994</sup> *Guthlac A* prominently opens with a dialogue between an angel and soul that relates the pleasant emotions and phases which the newly released soul will soon experience in a variation of the body and soul dialogue.<sup>995</sup> In fact, its place at the beginning and the absence of any direct reference to Guthlac led to the misconception that this was a separate poem until its foreshadowing of Guthlac's soul's ascension at the end of the poem was finally connected. This unifying structure provides a more uplifting arrangement to advise his audience to live well using specific reasoning, rather than seeking to terrify them through focusing upon the demonic attacks and tortures of hell that dominate the middle of this composition.<sup>996</sup> The terrifying visions which serve to establish Guthlac's sanctity in *Guthlac A* bear further evidence of the influence of the *Visio Pauli* for the demons declare Guthlac an invader of the coveted place where they are permitted rest for a time.<sup>997</sup> These are not the demons of Antonine convention which are expected to test hermits but demons who are the enemies of God, actively sought out by his soldier Guthlac. Visualisations such as these augmented the visions of the Guthlac legend to exhort rather than support Guthlac's claims to sanctity in conventional ways. Their apocryphal source may have meant that the Exeter book poems faced criticism about their orthodoxy, however the explanations that they supplemented enable the *A* and *B* poets to respectively develop their material to emphasize an enviable afterlife.

That these pre-Christian, Biblical, hagiographical and apocryphal visions were sought out at all, suggests that they were useful for supplementing and explaining the various types of visions that the Guthlac dossier contains. Visions by definition require interpretation and examination of these traditions substantiates that they have long been revered as divine visualizations of the relationship, propagated by Christianity, between one's choices and deeds and their soul's fate upon death. It is also clear that by alluding to these established, if somewhat unorthodox traditions, these poets/hagiographers sought to use known motifs and conventions that fit their particular purpose. Nor can the Guthlac visions be defined according to one source. By virtue of their variety and number, and by the survival of dossier materials which treat only Guthlac's otherworldly vision, do these aspects warrant further investigation of their contemporary relevance.

### **The eighth-century popularity of visionary accounts and their legacy**

Numerous visionary accounts have survived from eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England when the legend was first being composed. This surge in surviving visionary material will allow us to consider the role of the Guthlac visions in relation to this context. The only other

<sup>994</sup> Di Paolo Healey, ed., *The Old English Vision of St Paul*, pp.48-50.

<sup>995</sup> *GA*, ll. 1-29; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>996</sup> Especially the advice in *GA*, ll.781-815; *Ibid*, pp. 106-7. Also Homily XVI; *The Blickling Homilies*, ed. Richard J. Kelly (London: 2003), pp. 194-5.

<sup>997</sup> *GA*, ll. 200-25; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 89.

contemporary saint's *vita* to have contained visionary experiences like Guthlac's was that of St Fursa. The anonymous *vita*, and Bede's extract of it, advertised how Fursa was struck down while travelling and though he appeared dead, was merely transported out of his body to see the heavenly angels and receive advice to care for his body if he wanted to return one day.<sup>998</sup> The angels returned Fursa's spirit but then returned for him three days later in order to guide him through the terrors of hell. Like Guthlac, Fursa sees many horrible demons and is saved by the protection of his guiding angel, who disputes Satan's claims to Fursa's soul over minor sins. However, Fursa does not return to his body unscathed by this experience because he once accepted the clothing of a sinner and so is burned by this man's touch when passing through the four testing fires.<sup>999</sup>

Similar visionary accounts were also recorded by Bede in later books of his *Historia*. The nobleman Drythelm was also related to have had an out of body experience while presumed dead in which he was guided through hell, shown a taste of the pleasures in heaven, and advised to mend his ways.<sup>1000</sup> Moreover, this vision was markedly similar to one, recorded in a letter by Boniface, which caused a monk of Much Wenlock to loathe his body and yearn for that delightful place ever afterwards.<sup>1001</sup> However, not all of the surviving visions show significant repentance as the result of a vision. The chapter following Drythelm's account presents a contrasting vision that relates how another nobleman ignored King Cenred's advice to repent his wicked ways and was granted a vision on his deathbed in which he saw his life's deeds written down in two books, separating the good from the wicked, as having predetermined that his soul was going to hell.<sup>1002</sup> The commonalities amongst these Anglo-Saxon visions are that they fulfilled an admonitory role, setting forth contrasting paradigms that urge immediate repentance and significant penitence in order to permit the dreamer future entry into the desirable afterlife. They even advise specific activities, such as fasting, almsgiving and Psalm singing as penitential acts, regardless of the visionary's class or calling.<sup>1003</sup> Most importantly, all of these visions relate how the dreamer discussed their vision with a person of authority to ensure that the vision is correctly interpreted.

The very fact that visions should immediately be discussed with a person of authority is striking because it testifies to the process by which a vision was shared with a member of the clergy who interpreted and likely shaped it using conventional motifs. Perhaps this instruction was in part due to the legacy of disapproved visionary traditions being in circulation, like those influenced by the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, or even due to an increasing number of visions being reported. Distrust of visions is certainly attributed to the Smith in Lantfred's later *narratio de visione fabri* who fears telling anyone about his vision because they might think him crazy until St

<sup>998</sup> *HE*, III.19; *VF*, III-V; Kobos, "The Structure and Background of *Guthlac A*," Appendix C, pp. 215-6.

<sup>999</sup> *VF*, VII-XXIX.; *ibid*, pp. 218-36.

<sup>1000</sup> *HE*, V.12.

<sup>1001</sup> Sisam, *Studies in OEL*, pp. 212-24 and Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western Europe, 600-800*, p. 243.

<sup>1002</sup> *HE*, V.13. Aedilwulf was also shown a book in his vision before an angel told him that '*Sciens iterum maiora videbis.*'

Alcuin, *The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York*, ed. Peter Godman (Oxford: 1982), I. 1613, p. 132.

<sup>1003</sup> Thacker, "Monks, Preaching," p. 157. For example, *GA*, II. 805-10; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, p. 107.

Swithun has appeared another two times, getting increasingly irate.<sup>1004</sup> Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the visionary accounts from Anglo-Saxon England survive because they were considered educative and useful within the ecclesiastical context in which they were preserved. Many even contain elements that were not derived from the pre-existing visionary tradition, such as the description of hell as a place of alternating extremes of hot and cold, revealing that this context had established some of its own conventions.<sup>1005</sup>

Many studies have considered socially relevant aspects of specific visions embedded within universal archetypes the 'practical and tactical necessity' of their survival.<sup>1006</sup> If visions were popular amongst the laity and were useful evangelically to encourage penitence, then it was worthwhile for the clergy to circulate them. One could even argue that it was even more effective for the clergy to circulate visions experienced and modelled by laymen as this would provide a more accessible exemplar for this type of audience. In effect, clerical management of visions extended beyond ensuring their orthodoxy to support the system whereby penance should be administered prior to impending death.<sup>1007</sup> Indeed, Le Goff has pointed out in his research upon the relationship between popular and clerical culture that the adaptation of the latter to the interests of the former is already evidenced in the use of vernacular language, oral forms like sermons, visual ceremony and involvement in saints' cults.<sup>1008</sup> Visionary accounts provided the clergy with a vivid genre through which they could exhort and admonish Christian living.

Let us now consider in what manner the Guthlacian visions adhere to contemporary approaches to visions, since it has already been identified in what ways they utilize traditional motifs. To begin with, Guthlac's night-time contemplation of the pitiful deaths of former kings, of the transience of wealth and glory, and of the possible outcome of his own soul reveals the thought-process embedded in these visions by which an individual was encouraged to consider their life's path and reform.<sup>1009</sup> Like Drythelm, Guthlac gives up his former life, in this case taking monastic vows and soon after becoming a hermit. Indeed, the decision to become a hermit perhaps suited the penance that Guthlac could have been given for his militaristic exploits. The *Penitential of Theodore* recommended penance for seven to ten years for murder, another three years without flesh or wine if it was premeditated and he did not lay aside his arms, although those who committed many evil deeds, including murder, adultery and theft, should enter the monastery and do penance until their death.<sup>1010</sup> In fact Felix's familiarity with this *Penitential* may

<sup>1004</sup> Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Minsters of Winchester and the Cult of St Swithun*, pp. 260-5.

<sup>1005</sup> i.e. *HE*, V.12; *VG*, XXXI.

<sup>1006</sup> Phrase from Jacques Le Goff, "Clerical Culture and Folklore Traditions in Merovingian Civilization," in *Time, Work & Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: 1980), pp. 156-7; Blair, "Local Saints," p. 479; Aaron J. Gurevich and Ann Shukman, "Oral and Written Culture of the Middle Ages: Two 'Peasant Visions' of the late twelfth-early thirteenth centuries," *New Literary History* XVI, no. 1 (Autumn, 1984), pp. 51-2, 64.

<sup>1007</sup> Thacker, "Monks, Preaching," pp. 157-69.

<sup>1008</sup> Goff, "Clerical Culture and Folklore Traditions in Merovingian Civilization," pp. 156-7.

<sup>1009</sup> *VG*, XVIII; *OEVG*, II. Contrast with *GA*, II. 108-40a; Roberts, *Exeter Book Poems*, pp. 86-7 which describes how Guthlac's cravings for war subsided after God appointed an angel to do battle with a demon for his soul.

<sup>1010</sup> The *Penitential of Theodore*, 'Of Manslaughter', IV.1-7 and 'Of Many and Diverse Evils, and What Necessary Things are Harmless', VII.1; *Medieval Handbooks of Penance. A Translation of the Principal Libri Poenitentiales and Selections*

be corroborated because the point following the consequences for those who have committed many evil deeds advises men who have seized money from their conquered enemies to give a third part of it to the church or the poor; the same amount which Felix explains Guthlac returned to those he pillaged.<sup>1011</sup> Felix's depiction of Guthlac's conversion offers an explanation of how visions were supposed to function and perhaps because it relates this and not the vision itself in detail, it has not been classified as a visionary account.<sup>1012</sup> However in alluding to the function of contemporary visions to explain Guthlac's rejection of his military career, Felix was able to provide a more straightforward model of repentance and penance for the laity than any vision experienced by an ecclesiastic. After all, none of the other surviving contemporary visions specifically explains what sins the visionary must repent of in their own lives, with the exception of Fursa who had sinned by association in accepting goods from a sinner.<sup>1013</sup> The idea that significant reform would be able to counterbalance past transgression is then made explicit through Guthlac's advance to heaven and through the protection which God and St Bartholomew provided while he was still alive. Even the brief mention that Guthlac's holy hermitage would in the future be inhabited by another converted pagan, Cissa, implies that Guthlac's model was neither unobtainable nor matchless.<sup>1014</sup>

Besides, the Guthlac legend still contains a prominent vision which functioned much the same as contemporary accounts; the episode relating how demons dragged the saint to see into hell. All of the other demonically sourced visions that Guthlac experienced after becoming a hermit were imitative of the temptations and tests which Anthony endured. He is wheedled by demons to commit the sins of despair, lust, excessive fasting, and vainglory before they try to terrify him.<sup>1015</sup> In fact, the A poet's invention of an immediately preceding vision of monastic misbehaviour clearly juxtaposes Guthlac's model against those of sinning monks who would have been admonished by this example that they are not immune to the consequences of their lives' actions.<sup>1016</sup> The vision in which Guthlac is dragged by the demons to hell is the only vision that is noticeably reminiscent of contemporary accounts and their conventional motifs, especially since the terrors which Guthlac views are described as fitting his particular sins. That is why this episode could function independently of the Guthlac legend and likely did in more versions than have survived; it contained all the vivid elements of a terrifying vision designed to encourage significant repentance. Guthlac correctly places his faith in God's judgment whether he deserves this fate and is rewarded by the interjection of St Bartholomew, who orders his safe return to the

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from *Related Documents*, trans. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamar, 1990 ed. (New York: 1938), ch.III, pp.187, 190. Guthlac took holy orders, abstained from alcohol and learned the Psalms in VG, XIX-XXII; OEVG, II.

<sup>1011</sup> VG, XVII; OEVG, II; *The Penitential of Theodore, 'Of Many and Diverse Evils, and What Necessary Things are Harmless'*, VII.2, Ibid, p. 190. Dr. Stancliffe drew my attention to Theodore's Penitential as the source for Guthlac's return of 1/3 of his booty.

<sup>1012</sup> For example, "Visions," *The Anglo-Saxon Encyclopaedia*, pp. 462-3.

<sup>1013</sup> VF, XXIX.

<sup>1014</sup> VG, XLVIII; OEVG, XVIII.

<sup>1015</sup> VG, XXIX-XXXIII; OEVG, IV-V; GA, II. 262-322, 412-529, 579-818; GB, II. 113a4-41.

<sup>1016</sup> GA, II.404-529.

jubilation of angelic choirs or, in the adaptations made by the *A* poet and the Vercelli homilist, accompanies the saint directly to heaven.<sup>1017</sup> In this way, this vision exemplifies how Guthlac made significant repentance, gaining lifetime protection and entry into heaven. The message is admirable and this would have been acceptable, while still containing all the sensational and vivid elements which would have made such an account so widely popular.

The structure of Guthlac's vision of hell resonates with the contemporary visionary accounts of Fursa, Drythelm and the monk of Much Wenlock in its juxtapositions of heaven and hell designed to deter those who might not seek to reform their ways. In fact, Guthlac's example as revealed through this vision and the other Antonine ones offers an interesting contrast to the visions which Ceolred, King of Mercia figures in. Ceolred is mentioned twice in Felix's *vita*; as the king during whose reign Guthlac had the night-time vision of an invading British army, and as the enemy who harries Æthelbald throughout other lands.<sup>1018</sup> However, Ceolred also notably figured in two visionary accounts that were recorded in the letters of Boniface. In one, Boniface records how Ceolred was attacked by an evil spirit while dining at a banquet and died un-shriven and unrepentant.<sup>1019</sup> Another letter records how a monk of Much Wenlock saw in his vision Ceolred being carried off by demons to hell.<sup>1020</sup> The negative result of the Ceolred visions juxtapose his model against Guthlac's and by extension, against Æthelbald's, who Felix relates receives the earthly reward of Ceolred's throne in return for his steadfast faith. These contrasting visionary accounts from the same period demonstrate an interest in relating the consequences of not just certain actions but of specific person's actions, as they would have supported Ceolred's successor's claims to Mercian throne and by extension, East Anglia's support of this candidate and his saintly patron. Because of these contemporary contextual interpretations and the interest royal patrons and their courts might have had in them, the visions set out in the early Guthlacian materials can be considered to have been intended for an audience that included the laity.

By the time that the Norman developments of the Guthlac dossier were being produced, it becomes clear that the visionary aspects of the legend were no longer as important as Æthelbald's perceived involvement in the cult's development was.<sup>1021</sup> Both Orderic Vitalis and the pseudo-Peter of Blois, copying from him, do not record any new visions with the exception of a brief appearance alongside St Bartholomew designed to confirm the incorruptibility and status of the martyred Earl Waltheof to a concerned Abbot Geoffrey.<sup>1022</sup> Henry of Avranches, writing much later, is also at a loss to relate any new involvement by the saint and instead resorts to inventing an otherwise unrecorded vision of devil impersonating Pega that apparently led to their

<sup>1017</sup> VG, XXX-XXXIII; OEVG, V; GA, II. 579-818; Vercelli Homily XXIII, II. 67-120.

<sup>1018</sup> VG, XXXIV, XLIX; OEVG, VI, XIX.

<sup>1019</sup> Michael Tangl, ed., *Die Briefe Des Heiligen Bonifatius Und Lullus, Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolae Selectae* (Berlin: 1916), Ep.73, pp. 152-3.

<sup>1020</sup> "An Old English Translation of a Letter from Wynfrith to Eadburga," in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature*, ed. Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: 1953), pp. 212-23.

<sup>1021</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>1022</sup> Chibnall, ed., *Orderic Vitalis' HE*, IV, pp. 348-51; Ingulph, *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers*, trans. Henry T. Riley (London: 1854), pp. 242-3.

separation pact.<sup>1023</sup> In fact, only two other tales bearing visionary qualities have come to my attention and both of these contain many folkloric elements which suggest they long ago deviated from the hagiographical legend begun by Felix and last contributed to by Henry of Avranches.<sup>1024</sup> Guthlac's popularity, like the popularity of the visionary accounts which figured so prominently in the early days of the cult, had waned to a point where no new energy was expended upon this aspect of Guthlac's fame.

Where the visionary material appears to have upheld its original prominence however, is in the visual representations of the Guthlac legend. The visionary accounts lend themselves dramatically to reflection, over images of Guthlac fasting or praying, and present a reminder to those less literate observers of the possible joys or terrors awaiting at death. Indeed, the arrangement by which the congregation passing under the quatrefoil at Crowland or on either side of the 'Guthlacian' column base at Peterborough, ensures that the cautionary directive of the visionary tradition was still being used.<sup>1025</sup> The Harley Roll Y.6 from whence many of these images may have been inspired, is dominated by episodes showing Guthlac's conversion, his visions of an angel, St Bartholomew, and various demonic attacks as well as Æthelbald's posthumous vision of the saint.<sup>1026</sup> So too might the western quatrefoil at Crowland depict mainly visionary episodes.<sup>1027</sup> Quite obviously the visions of the Guthlac narrative were still considered relevant enough to be portrayed on Crowland's exterior into the thirteenth century. They invite reflection still.

<sup>1023</sup> HA, ll. 678-726; Bolton, "Thesis," pp. 66-8.

<sup>1024</sup> A tale associated with Castle Carlton-Ormsby in Lincolnshire describes how a Norman, Hugh Barde, saved the village from a dragon by calling on St Guthlac who blinded the dragon so that Hugh could slay it; Jacqueline Simpson, Jennifer Westwood, *The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys* (London: 2005), pp. 444-445. The romance, *Sir Gowther*, relates how Gowther was born when his mother was impregnated by the devil though his death is conflated with St Guthlac; Radulescu, "Penitential Romance and Political Martyrs in 15<sup>th</sup> Century England."

<sup>1025</sup> See figs. 26, 44.

<sup>1026</sup> Figs. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17.

<sup>1027</sup> I suggest that the quatrefoil depicts Guthlac beating demons with his flail in the centre and being carried away by demons and rescued by Bartholomew at top. It is also possible that the left petal depicts Guthlac appearing to Æthelbald in a vision, though this section and the far right petal are too damaged to be clearly as identifiable.

## Chapter VII

### CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine how changing emphases in the materials of the Guthlac dossier reflected shifts in its ecclesiastical context. When Guthlac died in 714, he was interred at his hermitage within a fenland border region chosen for its likeness to the deserts of ascetic hagiography. Although the original function of this site was not conducive to the apparatus of a cult, one persevered for possibly as long as three hundred years, until a monastic community subsumed the site and control of its legend. Subsequently, its success has been measured in this study not just in terms of longevity, from Crowland's modest origins in the eighth century through to its apogee during the abbacy of Henry de Longchamp circa 1191-1237, but through the sizeable dossier which evidences the adaptability of this legend to various purposes. The overreaching conclusion that emerges from an analysis of the texts and contexts of Crowland's cult of St Guthlac is that it enjoyed an early and sustained popular appeal due to the social relevance and adaptability of its legend to the interests of a wide audience. It has been reached through considering the impetus, dissemination, interaction and reception of this dossier's materials in relation to their audience and context. A review of the previous chapters will reveal how each sought to answer the overall question of what the materials of the Guthlac dossier can inform us about interest in St Guthlac.

This study began in chapter 2 by reassessing the dating, origins and provenance of the Guthlacian materials in order to update their historiography and establish a rough chronology. In examining the dossier with this goal in mind, it became possible to identify fourteen exceptional materials and classify them into four stages; the Origins, the Vernacular Variations, the Norman Developments and the Longchamp Revival. These stages linked materials not only by their language or period but by particular developments or shared narrative elements. Thus the Origins stage contains only Felix's *vita* because it has been shown that the account he set out is the prevailing version of the Guthlac legend and likely the earliest. The Vernacular Variations, contrastingly, group the Guthlac materials of the Exeter Book, the Old English *Martyrology*, the Vespasian translation of Felix's *life* and its related homily in the Vercelli Book due to their shared language and purposeful selection of episodes, rather than by less-certain dating or provenance.

The examination of these two groups indicates that these materials were circulated primarily south of the Midlands, reflecting the early Mercian and East Anglian interest in the cult which Felix first testified to. In fact, the Vernacular Variations contribute by virtue of their survival that this legend was so popular as to have been chosen early for translation, intended for an audience already familiar with this narrative. Such familiarity was certainly bred through the



transmission of this legend through services and the surviving *Martyrology* entry, Vercelli homily XXIII and the acrostics affixed to Felix's *vita* in Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 307 indicate how different narrative extracts could be adapted for this purpose. Yet it is also likely that oral tales were concurrently being circulated.<sup>1028</sup> The monastic context in which all the early materials have been shown here to have been copied and preserved nevertheless advocate the involvement and interest of the laity, particularly its elite; indeed unravelling the ownership of the *Codex Exoniensis* shows how *Guthlac A* and *B* may have been of as much interest to a layman as to an Episcopal library. Additionally, Felix's *vita* was dedicated to King Ælfwald of East Anglia and the tenth-century copy preserved in Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 389 depicts Ælfwald alongside Felix on its facing page, in clear deference to Ælfwald's role.

The materials created after the twelfth century, on the other hand, do not suggest a lay impetus for they were all created at Crowland and commissioned by various abbots, hence the classification of Norman Developments. Norman enthusiasm for the cult sought its revitalization through first commissioning an *Abbrevatio* of Felix's *vita* by Orderic Vitalis and then through the composition of a *Miracula et Translatio* to commemorate the translation of Guthlac's remains in 1136. It is also significant that within this century, Crowland suffered through a number of crippling natural disasters that forced the abbey to recreate the *Historia* first begun by Abbot Ingulph. The loss of this history allowed Crowland to forge a new ethos, partially based on fact and partially not, which would promote the abbey and secure its claims; Crowland adapted the early character of the cult, as encouraged by royalty, into a new foundation legend that traced back to Guthlac's lifetime and Æthelbald's patronage. The dating and provenance of these materials is also significant as it shows that no new Guthlacian texts were being created elsewhere by the twelfth century, indicating that widespread interest in this saint had diminished and that the legend had become the intellectual property of Crowland.

The pinnacle of Guthlac's cult occurred during a phase referred to as the Longchamp Revival, for the name of the abbot who enabled it. The materials produced during his abbacy; the Harley Roll, Crowland's west front sculptures, the relics, Douai MS 852 and the new epitomes by Peter of Blois and Henry of Avranches, demonstrate Henry of Longchamp's energy for promoting St Guthlac and Crowland's guardianship of his remains and relics. In fact, the clarity and focus which was brought to the Guthlac narrative wrested the shift in emphasis back from Guthlac's supposed role in Crowland's foundation to his own spiritual career and exemplary life. No better example of this shift can be shown than by the commissioning of two new Latin *vitae*, one in prose and the other in metrical hexameters, which contributed their author's own digressions and commentary to the narrative of Guthlac's spiritual career. Only at this stage could Felix's *vita* be said to have been truly replaced with an equivalent text.

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<sup>1028</sup>Felix recorded that there were enough stories in circulation to warrant '*sequentis libelli*' and it remains unresolved amongst scholars whether references to '*Hwæt we hyrdon of*' in *Guthlac A* reference its oral source. VG, prologue; GA, I.108.

This analysis of the Guthlac dossier then brought to light many questions about the physical development of Crowland as a site, particularly how the topography and geography influenced the nature of the cult. Corroborating historical, geological and place-name evidence outlined in chapter 3 indicates that Crowland was a peninsular promontory, lined with barrows and surrounded by fenland marshes, that was located in the borderlands of East Anglia and Mercia. This topography would have presented ideal, isolated conditions for a hermitage, according to the hagiographical exemplars that Felix knew. Even the landscape of these borderlands may have contributed to the perception of them as a physical and psychological barrier in peoples' imaginations since it is possible that Guthlac's Crowland shared localized perceptions of monster lore and fear of the fenland landscape with the poem *Beowulf*.<sup>1029</sup> Victory over the evil of this landscape permits human habitation, making it vital to the Guthlac narrative from its genesis but most explicitly in *Guthlac A*. The interest in, and use of, fenland perceptions in the Guthlac narrative demonstrate how integral they were to the appeal of this legend and its applicability to episodic development in the centuries following Guthlac's death, particularly amongst the Vernacular Variations. The topography and geography of Crowland provided the narrative with not only a means of proving Guthlac's asceticism and sanctity according to the conventions of St Anthony and other hermits of the desert, but with an actual site that functioned as a place of reflection and retreat for those seeking guidance, prophesy or healing.

The suitability of all these factors make it implausible to consider that Crowland was chosen for any proximity to an important centre because this would contradict Guthlac's original ascetic mandate. Moreover, Felix's silence regarding any guardian community alongside his references to royal involvement instead point towards Crowland functioning as an independent holy site supported by royal patronage and popular amongst the laity. Certainly, the implications of the political relationship between Ælfwald of East Anglia and Æthelbald of Mercia were optimistically treated in Felix's *vita*, suggesting that their joint interest in Guthlac was amicably shared in the years following his death. Indeed, the survival of early dedications or associations to Guthlac at Mercian sites like Repton, Lichfield and Hereford testify to his popularity because these sites did not contribute momentum to the cult. This can be proven because Crowland did not continue to function solely as an isolated fenland hermitage, instead becoming a cult centre for devotions to the saint and the home of a major Benedictine community, persistently dogged by disputes over surrounding lands and rivers. While Crowland's development can only be contradicted through archaeological examination, there is no textual evidence to support a monastery on the site earlier than the mid-tenth century. What happened between Pega, Æthelbald and Ælfwald's efforts and then is difficult to reconstruct, though it is quite possible that the site functioned after Guthlac's death much in the way it had functioned before. That the abbey constructed a foundation legend in the eleventh century whose inaccuracies testify to its

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<sup>1029</sup> Whitelock, *Audience*.

apparent inaccessibility and the competition it felt is palpable. Yet these inaccuracies are understandable if we consider them in light of significant alterations to the function of the site and the destructive fire of 1091. What the foundation legend does show is that the abbey was interested in preserving and perpetuating the image that it had been a royal foundation since Guthlac's lifetime, supported by kings and local lay elite like the knight Algar. The purpose of such an image must have been to secure the support of these groups, both legally and financially.

In chapter 4 I sought to demonstrate through an analysis of sources, style, language and treatment how the Guthlac dossier ensured the suitability, relevance and ultimately, the longevity of the Guthlac dossier for its monastic audience. Felix defined his *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* according to Evagrius' model of St Anthony however, he also corresponded his narrative progression and spiritual development to contemporary hagiographical models and the popularity of visionary accounts. The development of his subject according to these exemplars reveals Felix's intention to create a *vita* for a king that was an obvious and therefore acceptable imitation of the hagiographical genre. He succeeded in establishing Guthlac's cult at Crowland, though his style and diction eventually led the Norman abbots to commission new epitomes.

The majority of the Vernacular Variations that originated between Felix and the Norman Developments did not seek to proclaim Guthlac's sanctity but to use the instructive potential of episodes independently. Their contribution lies in showing how the Guthlac legend could be instructively adapted in the vernacular by those who were capable of understanding its usefulness and adaptability. Analyses of *Guthlac A* and *B* indicate that both poets sought to explain particular battles from the Guthlac legend using heroic imagery and allusion to liturgical, hagiographical and even apocryphal sources like the *Visio Sancti Pauli* to remark upon the ways in which a man might ensure his soul reaches heaven. Studies and source analyses have highlighted a substantial number of possible interpretations and allusions that would have ensured these poems' relevance for the monks who copied them into the Exeter book though their purpose remains unclear due to the paucity of comparable texts and conventions. It is however possible that the ideas and doctrines that these poems illustrated would have remained pertinent to this manuscript's audience and resonated with a Benedictine audience, maybe even for use on a particular liturgical date.

The Vercelli homily XXIII and the Old English *Martyrology* entry contrastingly were clearly intended for liturgical use, revealing how the legend was adapted to this use. The Vercelli homily ensures that the message of Guthlac's reform and steadfast faith is clear by having the saint proceed directly to heaven, like *Guthlac A*, following his most terrifying demonic vision of hell. The *Martyrology* entry meanwhile highlights Guthlac's predestination and angelic support to coincide with the liturgical year. Even the B.L. Cotton Vespasian MS D xxi context of the Old English version of Felix's *vita* had a liturgical context, as indicated by the reordering of chapters

and red capitals that begin with Guthlac's solitary life. Altogether, the Vernacular Variations evidence the demand for more accessible accounts of Guthlac that were plainly instructive for an audience incapable of understanding both the language and significance of Felix's *vita*. The evidence for this has been highlighted most notably by Whatley, who identified that the Vespasian *life* omits Æthelbald's request for a sign to prove Guthlac's prophesy in order to censor any evidence of disbelief or secular-clerical tension from its Latin source, and by Abdou, who notes juxtaposition in the types of speech used by the demons and Guthlac respectively in *Guthlac A.*<sup>1030</sup>

These surviving materials indicate why the legend was disseminated by a monastic context until the eleventh century, when we have surviving evidence of Crowland abbey actively promoting the cult. It is clear in reviewing the Latin texts that were created from this period onwards that they were produced to meet the specific requirements of the abbot who commissioned them, according to their particular concerns or priorities for their house. Thus Geoffrey thought it pertinent to have a new, simplified account of Felix's narrative while the miracles recorded after the 1136 translation demonstrate Waltheof and Ulfecetyl's desire to revive Guthlac's potency. The value of these materials consequently lies in acknowledging how the competing concerns of Crowland's foundation and even its other relics at times overshadowed or subverted the promotion of St Guthlac in the materials classified as Norman developments. In fact, the Crowland context of the materials produced during this stage indicate that the abbey sought to promote its illustrious associations with St Guthlac irregularly with understandably, mixed results. Abbot Henry de Longchamp can undeniably be considered the reason why Guthlac's cult did not slide into obscurity by the end of that century. His focus in emphasizing Guthlac's pre-eminence alongside new tales of his relics enabled Crowland to promote the cult in new and newly revised ways, not only to pilgrims but to the community charged with his guardianship. In fact, his last commission of a new metrical *vita* from Henry of Avranches indicates that the abbey needed a version for private contemplation certainly for its redeemer-abbot but perhaps also used to inspire his community.

In chapter 5 an attempt was made to explore one aspect of the Guthlac narrative which may have ensured its popular appeal from the outset; the social relevance of its heroic material. It is possible that the atypical descriptions of Guthlac's militaristic career were glorified in the *Vita Guthlaci* because they established Guthlac as a hero recognizable according to the conventions of secular society. In being commissioned by the East Anglian king, we might even consider that it was relevant to this patron's political and social context to include so many references to Guthlac's past career and widespread appeal. This may also have affected Felix's adaptation of the Guthlac legend to hagiographical convention by leading him to use Aeneas as a suitable heroic, Latin exemplar. Indeed, the use of phrases from and allusions to the *Aeneid* strongly

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<sup>1030</sup> Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Lives;" Abdou, "Speech and Power in Old English Conversion Narratives."

support that Felix was influenced by Aeneas' leadership and bravery, and by the descriptions of the Underworld and its inhabitants. Additionally, similarities of concept, terminology and form long noted between Felix's *vita* and *Beowulf* may support that these two texts reflect a similar environment and thought-world, perhaps even a particularly East Anglian one. The purpose of this chapter was to use Wormald's approach to *Beowulf* to explain the anomalous material in the Guthlac narrative while considering its role in the success of this cult, particularly its early years.<sup>1031</sup>

The prominence of visions in the Guthlac narrative is another aspect which may have contributed to the popular appeal of this cult. Chapter 6 considered that Guthlac's militaristic career and his conversion may have functioned like the visionary accounts that were popular around the time that Felix was writing and that it may even have emphasized the appropriate penance for his sins, in modelling Guthlac's response to these visions. It also argued that the visions themselves, though integral to establishing Guthlac's sanctity according to St Anthony's model, were supplemented by Virgil's *Aeneid*, biblical and apocryphal visions which provided explanations for what happened after death, specifically the consequences of past transgressions. Many of these sources also contributed inspiration to the most notable episode from the Guthlac narrative: the saint's vision of hell. This episode is undeniably the most prominent of the dossier and because it resonates with other contemporary visions of Fursa, Drythelm and the monk of Much Wenlock, it can be argued that it reflects many of the conventions that must have been circulating within ecclesiastical circles in the eighth century. It has been suggested that Guthlac's model for how a repentant warlord attained sanctity, contrasted explicitly with the visions that were in circulation about Ceolred, King of Mercia, and perhaps significantly with how Æthelbald gained Mercia's throne through following Guthlac's spiritual guidance. Such an interpretation might demonstrate how contemporary contextual interpretations and the interest royal patrons and their courts might have had in them contribute to our understanding of St Guthlac's early appeal.

It is through a consideration of the above factors, that this thesis has been able to elucidate how the cult of St Guthlac developed over time relative to its needs. Close examination of the dossier enabled an identification of variations made to the narrative which could then be considered in relation to their suggested historical context, or in the case of the later materials, directly to the interests of Crowland's abbots at a particular time. The significance of this research, in showing how the anomalous cult of a hermit-saint attracted royal patronage and sustained popular appeal before it was adopted and propagated by its Benedictine community, lies in the attitudes and interests it reflects.

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<sup>1031</sup> Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy."

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## **Appendix**

The Guthlac Medallions, included with permission, © British Library Board  
Harley Roll Y.6. Figs. I – XVIII.



Fig. 1 Guthlac decides to change his ways.



Fig. 2 Abandons his army.





Fig. 3 Received tonsure at Repton.



Fig. 4 Tatwine takes Guthlac to Crowland.





Fig. 5 Constructs his Oratory.



Fig. 6 Guthlac is visited by an angel and St Bartholomew.





Fig. 7 Demons scourge Guthlac and carry him into the air.



Fig. 8 St Bartholomew appears at the hell-mouth and gives Guthlac a scourge.





Fig. 9 Animal demons invade his dwelling.



Fig. 10 Heals Ecga with girdle.





Fig. 11 Bishop Hæddi consecrates Guthlac's chapel and ordains him priest.



Fig. 12 Guthlac counsels King Æthelbald.





Fig. 13 Guthlac is attended by Becel in his sickness.



Fig. 14 Guthlac dies and his soul is received by angels.





Fig. 15 Becel tells Pega of her brother's death.



Fig. 16 Pega and Becel prepare the body for burial.





**Fig. 17** King Æthelbald experiences a vision of the saint while praying at his tomb.



**Fig. 18 Benefactors present their gifts to Guthlac's shrine.**



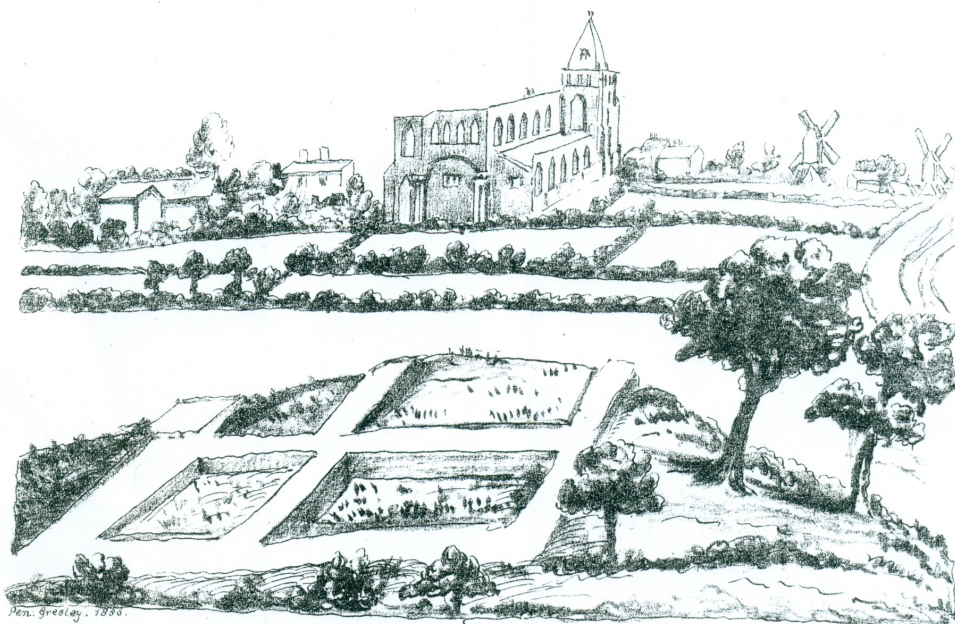
Fig. 19 Seal of Abbot Henry de Longchamp, reproduced with permission from © G. Warner, *The Harley Roll* (Oxford, 1928), p. 23.



Fig. 20 View of Anchorite house and Crowland Abbey. Reproduced from W. J. Hextall, *Some account of Croyland Abbey, Lines from the MSS. and drawings of the Rev. Wm. Stukeley* (London: 1856). Figs. 20 – 1.



View of Crowland from Anchorite house 26. sep  
1735.



This was St. Pega's cell, (St. Guthlac's sister)  
whilst he liv'd: then she remov'd to Peakirk.  
Alsin too was afterward an anchorite here. Pet. Blos.

Fig. 21 View of Crowland Abbey from Anchorite house foundations.



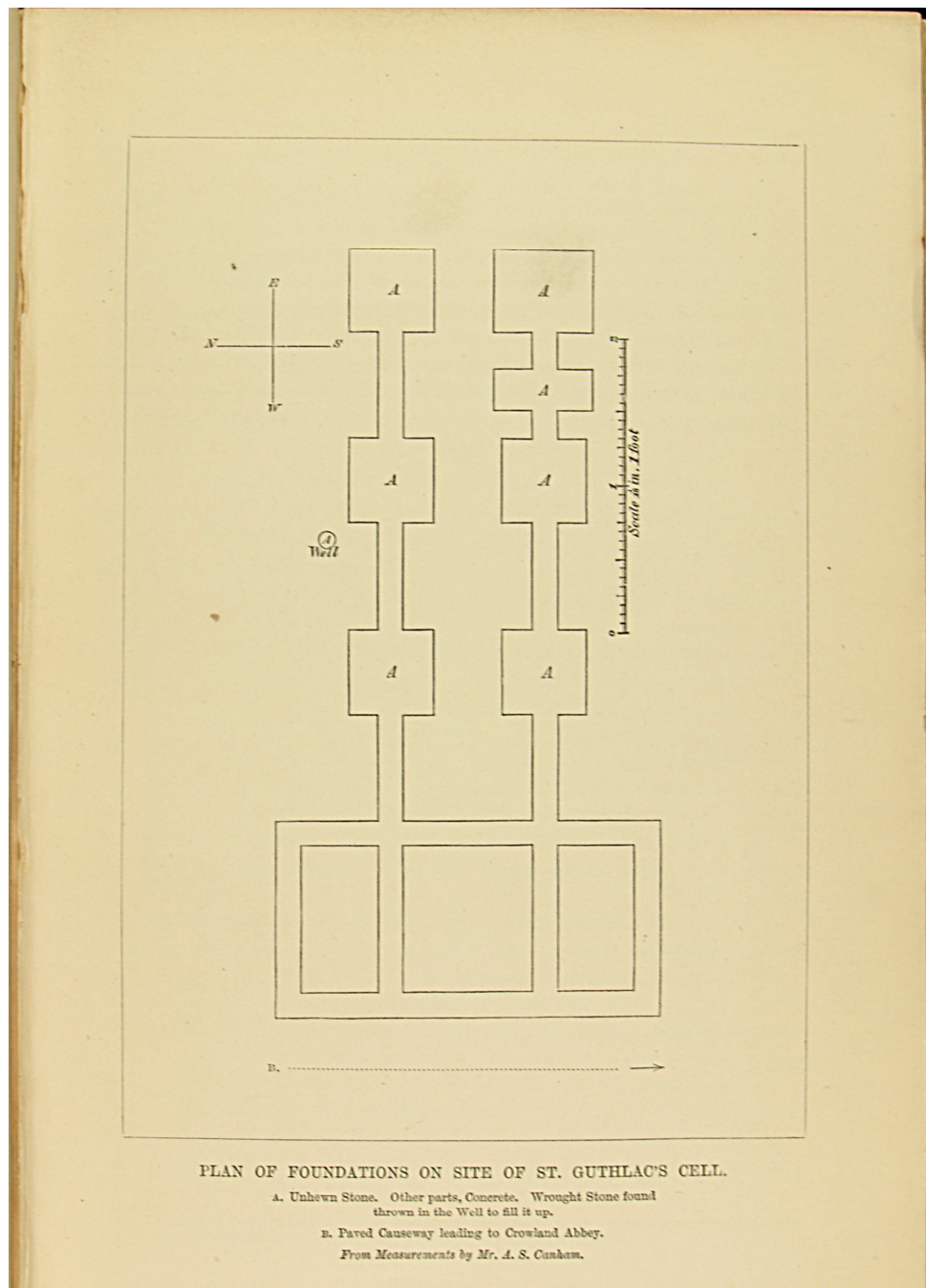


Fig. 22 A. S. Canham's plan of foundations of Anchorite house. Reproduced from W. de Gray Birch, *Memorials of St. Guthlac of Crowland* (Wisbech, 1881), pp. xlii – iii. Figs. 22-3.

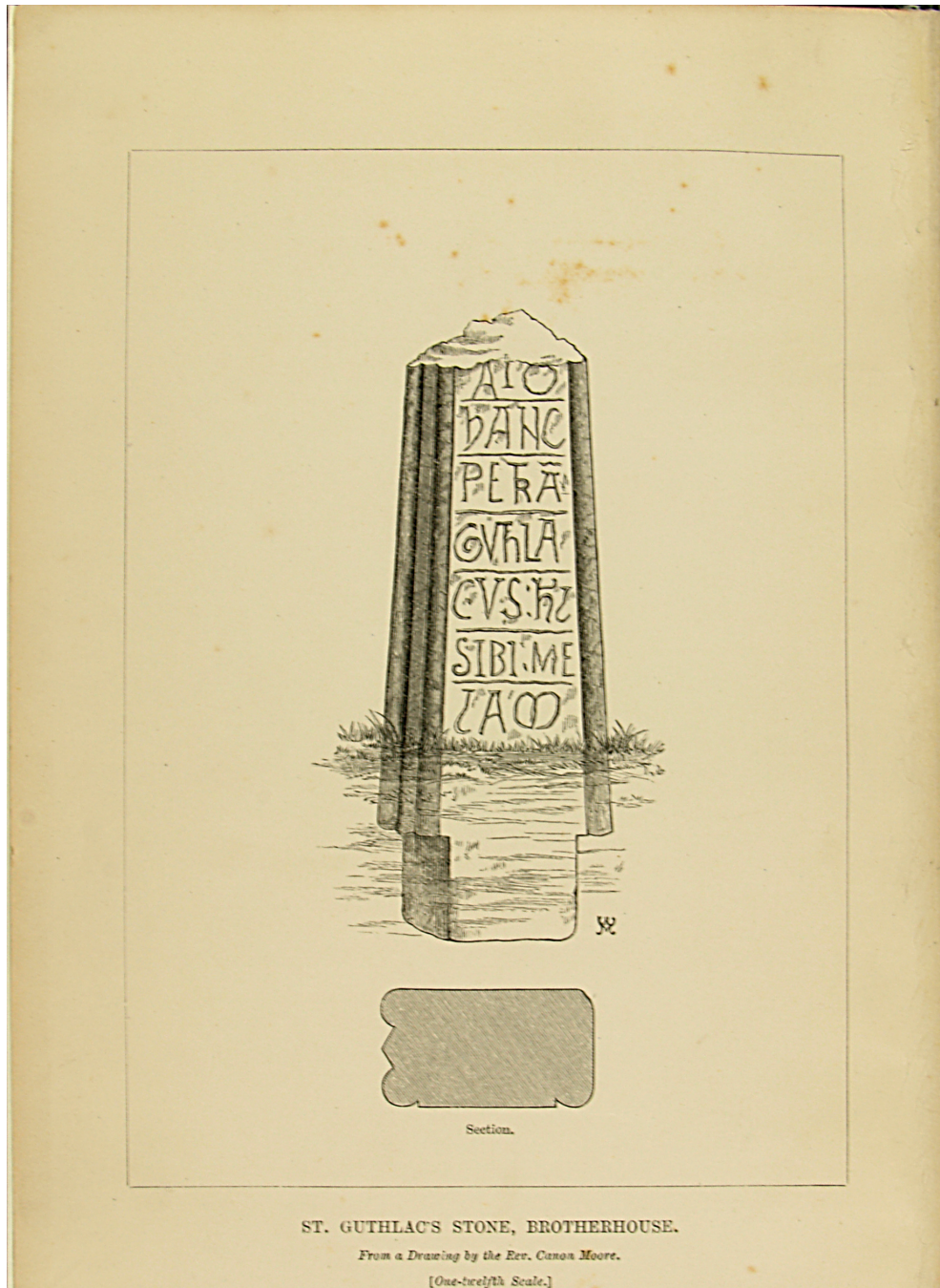
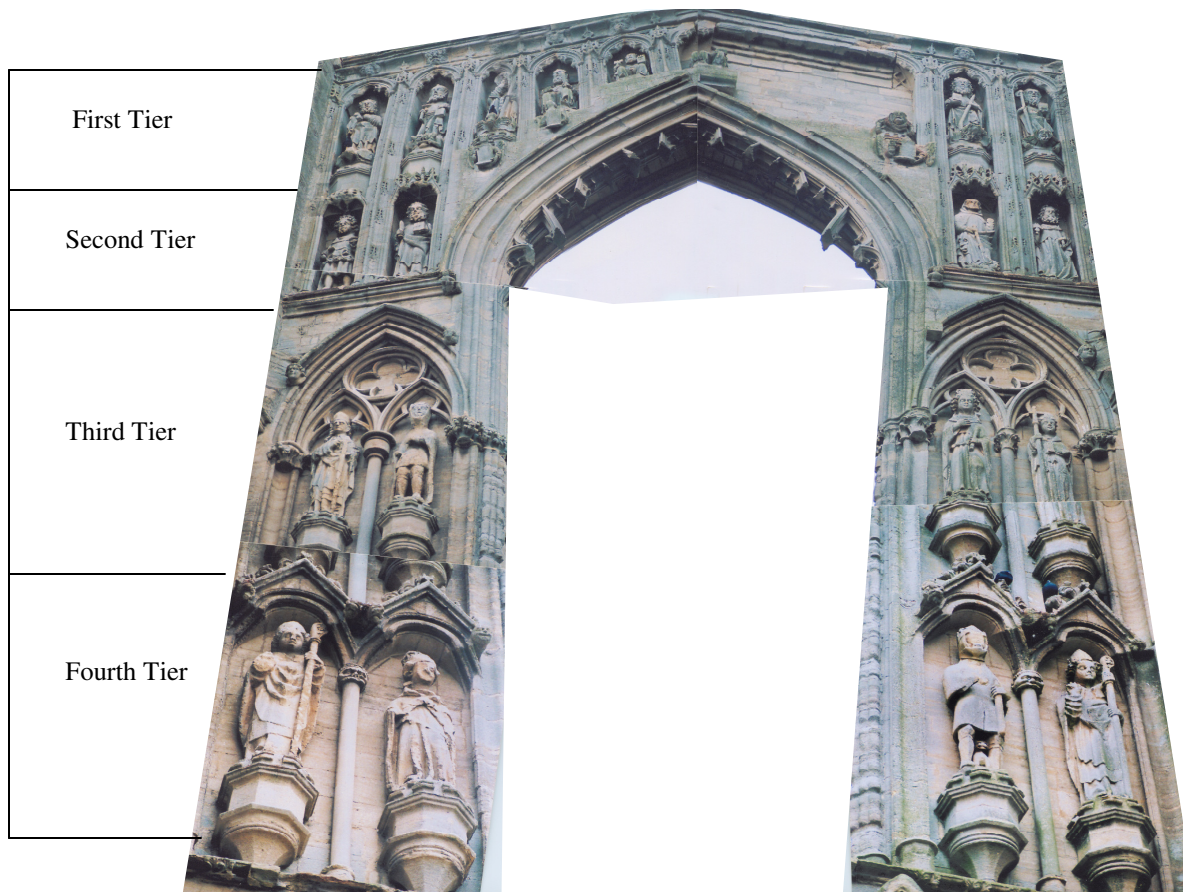


Fig. 23 Boundary marker known as Kenulph's Stone.





First Tier (left to right)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St Philip with loaves</li> <li>2. St James the Great with staff and wallet</li> <li>3. St Thomas touching his chin and holding a spear</li> <li>4. St Andrew with saltire</li> <li>5. St Peter with key and book</li> <li>6. St Paul with sword and book (only bottom half survives)</li> <li>7. &amp; 8. Listed 'vacant'</li> <li>9. St James the Less with fuller's broom</li> <li>10. St Jude with halberd and book</li> </ol>
Second Tier	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. King Æthelbald, founder and patron</li> <li>12. St Bartholomew with knife</li> <li>13. St Guthlac with scourge and demon underfoot</li> <li>14. King Richard II, re-founder of Crowland</li> </ol>
Third Tier	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Kenulph, first abbot or Thurketyl, re-founder after Danes</li> <li>16. King William the Conqueror</li> <li>17. Queen Matilda</li> <li>18. Abbot Ingulph, Chronicler of the <i>Historia Croilandensis</i></li> </ol>
Fourth Tier	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. King Wiglaf, sometime refugee at abbey and patron</li> <li>20. Archbishop Lanfranc</li> <li>21. Earl Waltheof, Crowland's other principle saint</li> <li>22. Abbot Geoffrey, who build the choir</li> </ol>

**Fig. 24** West front of Crowland Abbey. Picture © M. A. Bacola, 2008; chart after Rev. Stanley Smith, *Visitor's Guide to Croyland Abbey* (Spalding: 2007), p. 19.



**Fig. 25 Crowland's West Front. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.**



**Fig. 26 Crowland's West Front Quatrefoil. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.**



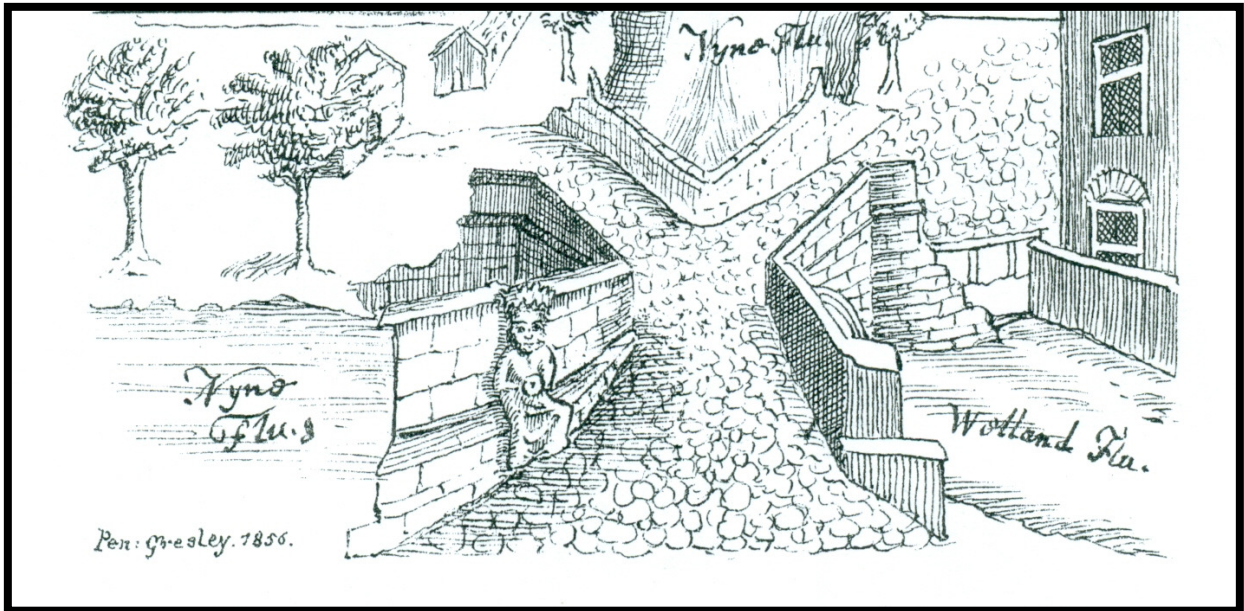


Fig. 27 Reproduced from W. J. Hextall, *Some account of Croyland Abbey, Lines from the MSS. and drawings of the Rev. Wm. Stukeley* (London: 1856).



Figs. 28 & 29 Seated king statue on Crowland's bridge. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.



Fig. 30 Detail of St Guthlac from the west front, second tier. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.



Fig. 31 Crowland Chantry Door. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.

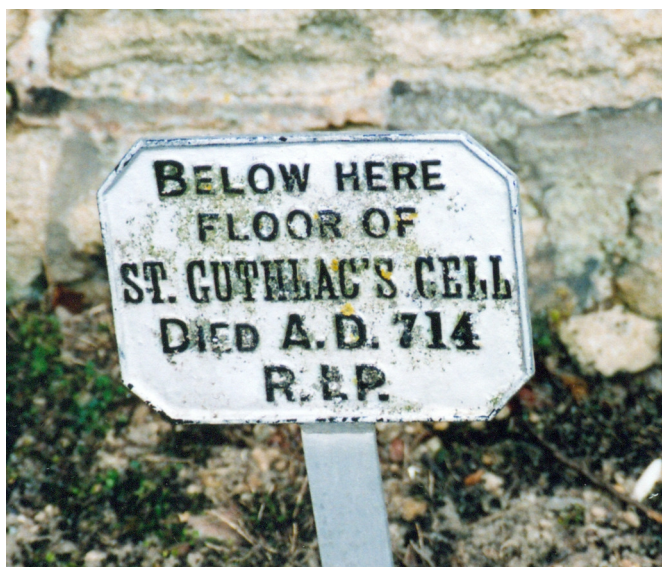




**Fig. 32** Crowland's Arms on west front gateposts. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.



**Fig. 33** Ruins abutting to the south of Crowland's west front door. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.



**Fig. 34** Sign marking the supposed location of Guthlac's cell, found to the south of Crowland's west front door. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.



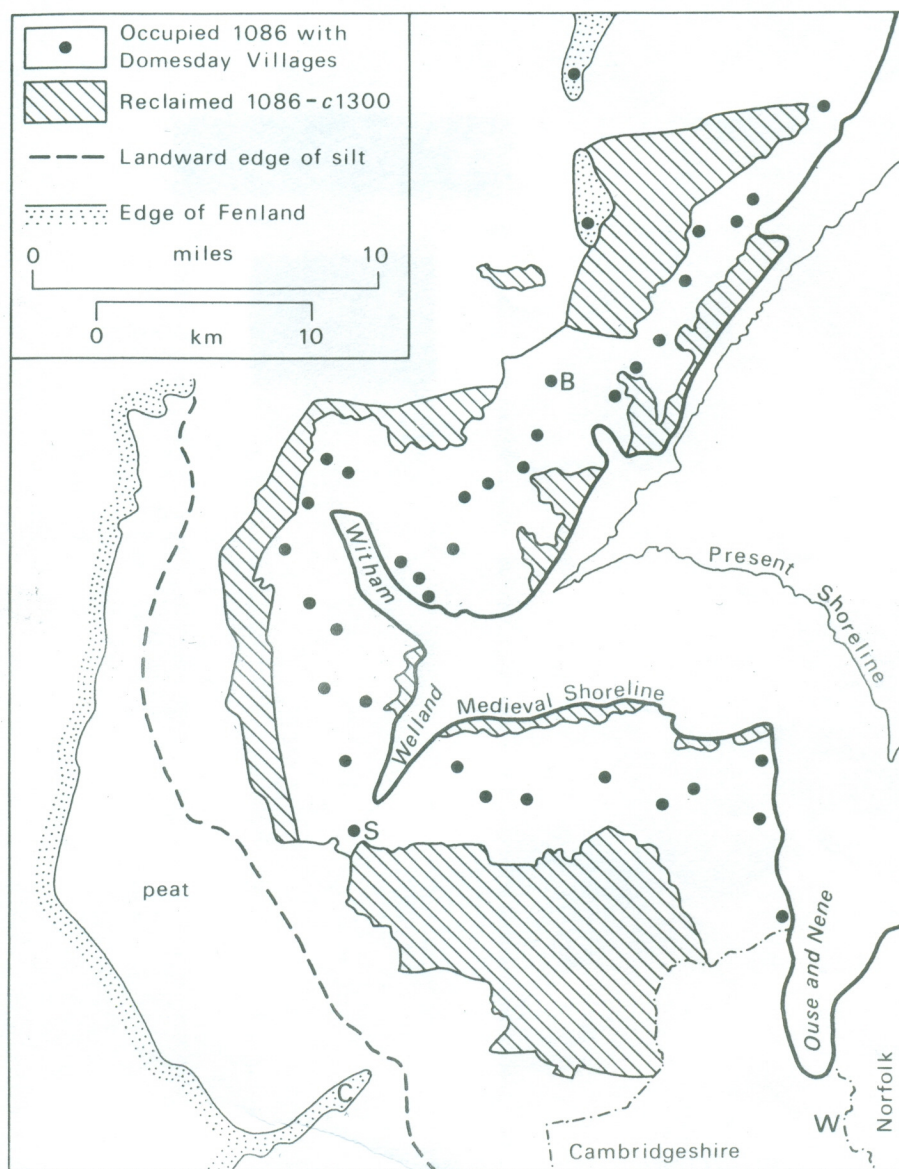
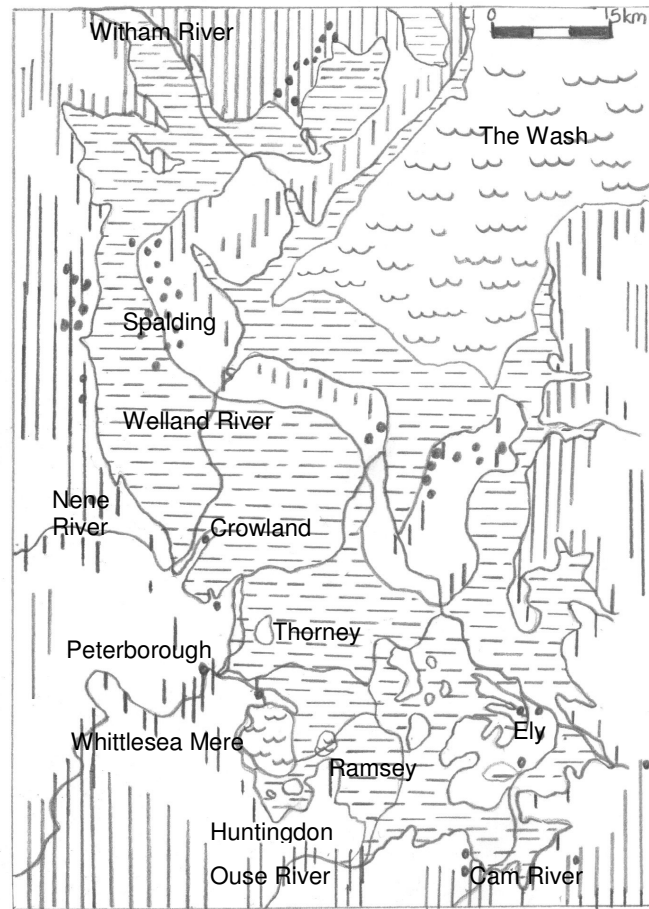




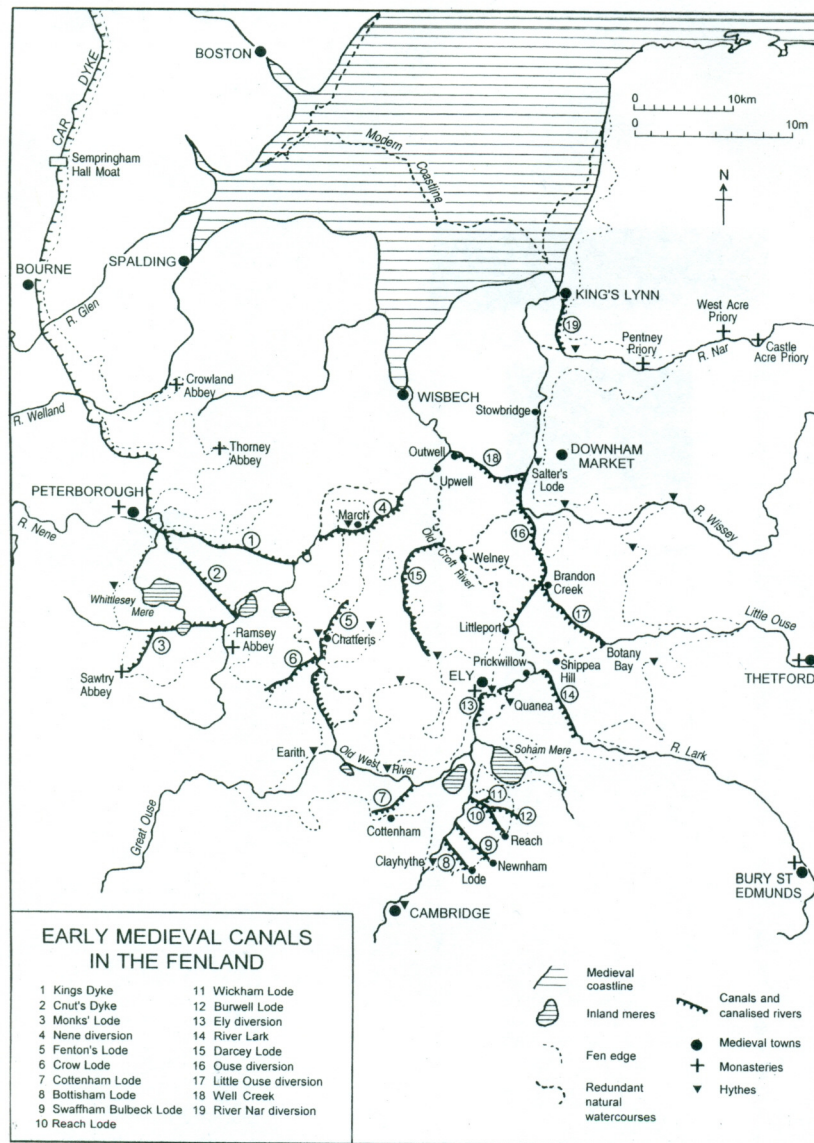


Fig. 35 Map showing reclamation in S. Lincolnshire, 1086 - 1300. Reproduced with permission © H. C. Darby, *The Changing Fenland* (Cambridge: 1983), p. 17.

Fig. 36 Map showing Anglo-Saxon and Domesday settlements in the Fens after J. Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology* (Cambridge: 2004), p. 66 and David Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: 1981), p. 12.



- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Marshlands                    |  Open Water                       |
|  Areas of Domesday settlements |  Areas of Anglo-Saxon settlements |



**Fig. 37 Map showing early medieval canals in the fenland. Reproduced with permission © James Bond, "Canal Construction: An Introductory Review" in J. Blair, ed., *Waterways and Canal buildings in Medieval England* (Oxford: 2007), p. 184.**

Fig. 38 Suggested locations of peoples listed in the Tribal Hidage after David Hill, "136: The Tribal Hidage," *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: 1980), p. 76.







Figure 117 Crowland: Mesolithic – Early Bronze Age

**Fig. 39** Map showing Crowland peninsula and the possible locations of tumuli as they were in the Mesolithic-Early Bronze Age. Reproduced with permission © P. P. Hayes and T. W. Lane, *The Fenland Project No. 5: Lincolnshire survey, the South-west Fens. East Anglian Archaeology 55* (1992), pp. 94 – 5.



Fig. 40: Map showing church dedications to St Guthlac and other major settlements.

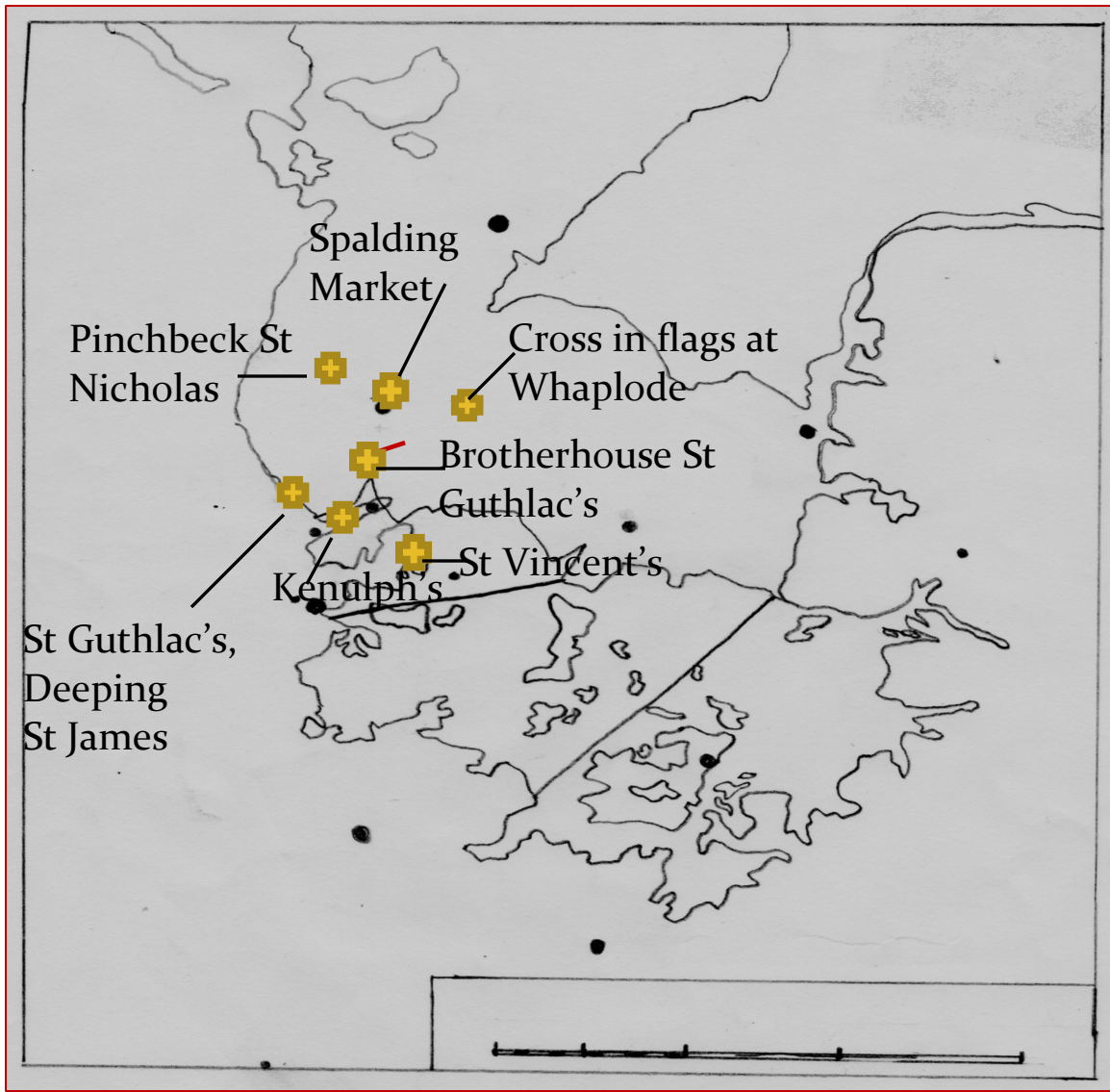


Fig. 41 Map showing Crowland's boundary crosses.





**Fig. 42** Laocoön and his sons being devoured by the serpents were similarly depicted in this statue in the Vatican Museum and in an illustration in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. Rome, Vatican, cod.vat.lat 3225, fol. 18v. Photograph © M.A. Bacola, 2002. See M. R. Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature* (New York: 1964), p. 112 for a reproduction of this Vatican MS illustration.



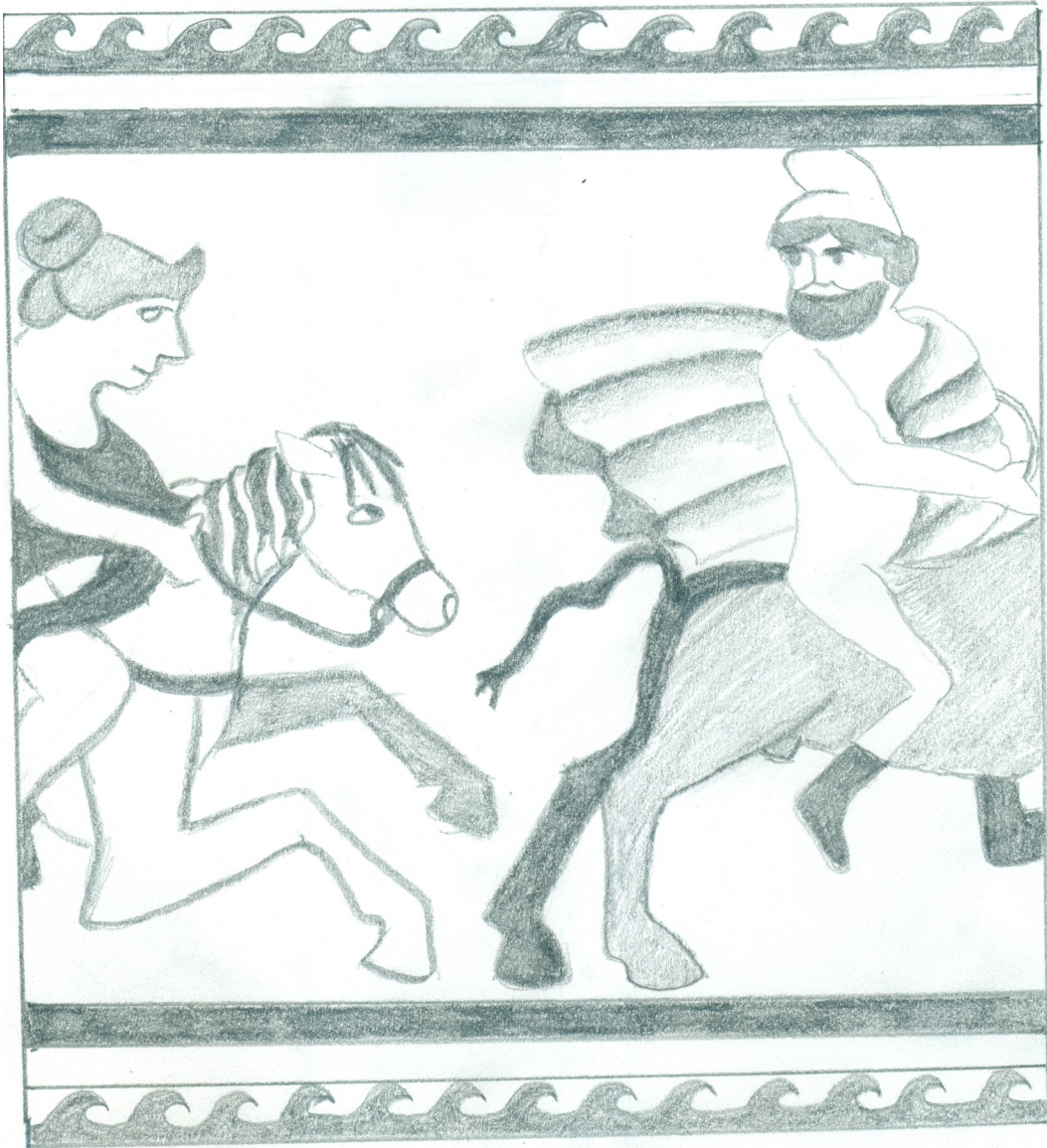


Fig. 43 Detail from a 4<sup>th</sup> c. Roman villa mosaic from Low Ham, Somerset showing Dido and Aeneas riding. © M.A. Bacola, 2012 after the photograph in M. R. Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature* (New York: 1964), p. 197.



**Fig. 44** West front porch column base at Peterborough Cathedral. © M. A. Bacola, 2008.